

# BIRDS



**Boomklever (*Sitta europea*)** Photo: Maarten Visser from Capelle aan den IJssel, Nederland, 2010  
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## American Relatives of *Sitta europea*:

**WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta carolinensis*) Nuthatch family  
The Project Gutenberg Etext of *Bird Neighbors*, by Neltje Blanchan  
Called also: Tree-Mouse; Devil Downhead

Length -- 5.5 to 6 inches. A trifle smaller than the English sparrow.

Male and Female -- Upper parts slate-color. Top of head and nape black. Wings dark slate, edged with black, that fades to brown. Tail feathers brownish black, with white bars. Sides of head and underneath white, shading to pale reddish under the tail. (Female's head leaden.) Body flat and compact. Bill longer than head.

Range -- British provinces to Mexico. Eastern United States.

Migrations -- October. April. Common resident. Most prominent in winter.

"Shrewd little haunter of woods all gray,  
Whom I meet on my walk of a winter day --  
You're busy inspecting each cranny and hole  
In the ragged bark of yon hickory bole;  
You intent on your task, and I on the law  
Of your wonderful head and gymnastic claw!

The woodpecker well may despair of this feat --  
Only the fly with you can compete!  
So much is clear; but I fain would know  
How you can so reckless and fearless go,  
Head upward, head downward, all one to you,  
Zenith and nadir the same in your view?"  
-- Edith M. Thomas.

Could a dozen lines well contain a fuller description or more apt characterization of a bird than these "To a Nuthatch"?

With more artless inquisitiveness than fear, this lively little acrobat stops his hammering or hatcheting at your approach, and stretching himself out from the tree until it would seem he must fall off, he peers down at you, head downward, straight into your upturned opera-glasses. If there is too much snow on the upper side of a branch, watch how he runs along underneath it like a fly, busily tapping the bark, or adroitly breaking the decayed bits with his bill, as he searches for the spider's eggs, larvae, etc., hidden there; yet somehow, between mouthfuls, managing to call out his cheery quank! quank! hank! hank!

Titmice and nuthatches, which have many similar characteristics, are often seen in the most friendly hunting parties on the same tree. A pine woods is their dearest delight. There, as the mercury goes down, their spirits only seem to go up higher. In the spring they have been thought by many to migrate in flocks, whereas they are only retreating with their relations away from the haunts of men to the deep, cool woods, where they nest. With infinite patience the nuthatch excavates a hole in a tree, lining it with feathers and moss, and often depositing as many as ten white eggs speckled with red and lilac) for a single brood.

### **RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*) Nuthatch family

Called also: Canada Nuthatch

Length -- 4 to 4.75 inches. One-third smaller than the English sparrow.

Male -- Lead-colored above; brownish on wings and tail. Head, neck, and stripe passing through eye to shoulder, black. Frontlet, chin, and shoulders white; also a white stripe over eye, meeting on brow. Under parts light, rusty red. Tail

feathers barred with white near end, and tipped with pale brown.

Female -- Has crown of brownish black, and is lighter beneath than male.

Range -- Northern parts of North America. Not often seen south of the most northerly States.

Migrations -- November. April. Winter resident.

The brighter coloring of this tiny, hardy bird distinguishes from the other and larger nuthatch, with whom it is usually seen, for the winter birds have a delightfully social manner, so that a colony of these Free masons is apt to contain not only both kinds of nuthatches and chickadees, but kinglets and brown creepers as well. It shares the family habit of walking about the trees, head downward, and running along the under side of limbs like a fly. By Thanksgiving Day the quank! quank! of the white-breasted species is answered by the tai-tai-tait! of the red-breasted cousin in the orchard, where the family party is celebrating with an elaborate menu of slugs, insects' eggs, and oily seeds from the evergreen trees.

For many years this nuthatch, a more northern species than the white-breasted bird, was thought to be only a spring and autumn visitor, but latterly it is credited with habits like its congener's in nearly every particular.

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178. =*Sitta canadensis*. = **Red-Breasted Nuthatch**.—About Camp 1, we several times heard Nuthatch voices but were unable to trace them to their origin and we cannot be certain of the species. Young took one at Camp 11 on the Little Sandhill Creek, August 21, feeding on woolly aphides on the cottonwoods. Neither Farley or Horsbrough report this species in the breeding season though Fleming has Red Deer specimens taken June 10.

†=*Sitta carolinensis tenuissima*= Grinnell. New subspecies. Grinnell, Condor, XX, No. 2, March 20, 1918, p. 88 (Hanaupah Canyon, Panamint Mts., Inyo Co., Calif.). Range: Panamint Mountains and White Mountains, California.

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## GOOSE FAIR

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*,  
by D. H. Lawrence

I

Through the gloom of evening, and the flare of torches of the night before the fair, through the still fogs of the succeeding dawn came paddling the weary geese, lifting their poor feet that had been dipped in tar for shoes, and trailing them along the cobble-stones into the town. Last of all, in the afternoon, a country girl drove in her dozen birds, disconsolate because she was so late. She was a heavily built girl, fair, with regular features, and yet unprepossessing. She needed chiselling down, her contours were brutal. Perhaps it was weariness that hung her eyelids a little lower than was pleasant. When she spoke to her clumsily lagging birds it was in a snarling nasal tone. One of the silly things sat down in the gutter and refused to move. It looked very ridiculous, but also rather pitiful, squat there with its head up, refusing to be urged on by the ungentle toe of the girl. The latter swore heavily, then picked up the great complaining bird, and fronting her road stubbornly, drove on the lamentable eleven.

No one had noticed her. This afternoon the women were not sitting chatting on their doorsteps, seaming up the cotton hose, or swiftly passing through their fingers the piled white lace; and in the high dark houses the song of the hosiery frames was hushed: "Shackety-boom, Shackety-shackety-boom, Z—zzz!" As she dragged up Hollow Stone, people returned from the fair chaffed her and asked her what o'clock it was. She did not reply, her look was sullen. The Lace Market was quiet as the Sabbath: even the great brass plates on the doors were dull with neglect. There seemed an afternoon atmosphere of raw discontent. The girl stopped a moment before the dismal prospect of one of the great warehouses that had been gutted with fire. She looked at the lean, threatening walls, and watched her white flock waddling in reckless misery below, and she would have laughed out loud had the wall fallen flat upon them and relieved her of them. But the wall did not fall, so

she crossed the road, and walking on the safe side, hurried after her charge. Her look was even more sullen. She remembered the state of trade—Trade, the invidious enemy; Trade, which thrust out its hand and shut the factory doors, and pulled the stockings off their seats, and left the web half-finished on the frame; Trade, which mysteriously choked up the sources of the rivulets of wealth, and blacker and more secret than a pestilence, starved the town. Through this morose atmosphere of bad trade, in the afternoon of the first day of the fair, the girl strode down to the Poultry with eleven sound geese and one lame one to sell.

The Frenchmen were at the bottom of it! So everybody said, though nobody quite knew how. At any rate, they had gone to war with the Prussians and got beaten, and trade was ruined in Nottingham!

A little fog rose up, and the twilight gathered around. Then they flared abroad their torches in the fair, insulting the night. The girl still sat in the Poultry, and her weary geese unsold on the stones, illuminated by the hissing lamp of a man who sold rabbits and pigeons and such-like assorted live-stock.

## II

In another part of the town, near Sneinton Church, another girl came to the door to look at the night. She was tall and slender, dressed with the severe accuracy which marks the girl of superior culture. Her hair was arranged with simplicity about the long, pale, cleanly cut face. She leaned forward very slightly to glance down the street, listening. She very carefully preserved the appearance of having come quite casually to the door, yet she lingered and lingered and stood very still to listen when she heard a footstep, but when it proved to be only a common man, she drew herself up proudly and looked with a small smile over his head. He hesitated to glance into the open hall, lighted so spaciouly with a scarlet-shaded lamp, and at the slim girl in brown silk lifted up before the light. But she, she looked over his head. He passed on.

Presently she started and hung in suspense. Somebody was crossing the road. She ran down the steps in a pretty welcome, not effuse, saying in quick, but accurately articulated words: "Will! I began to think you'd gone to the fair. I came out to listen to it. I felt almost sure you'd gone. You're coming in, aren't you?" She waited a moment anxiously. "We expect you to dinner, you know," she added wistfully.

The man, who had a short face and spoke with his lip curling up on one side, in a drawling speech with ironically exaggerated intonation, replied after a short hesitation:

"I'm awfully sorry, I am, straight, Lois. It's a shame. I've got to go round to the biz. Man proposes—the devil disposes." He turned aside with

irony in the darkness.

“But surely, Will!” remonstrated the girl, keenly disappointed.

“Fact, Lois!—I feel wild about it myself. But I've got to go down to the works. They may be getting a bit warm down there, you know”—he jerked his head in the direction of the fair. “If the Lambs get frisky!—they're a bit off about the work, and they'd just be in their element if they could set a lighted match to something——”

“Will, you don't think——!” exclaimed the girl, laying her hand on his arm in the true fashion of romance, and looking up at him earnestly.

“Dad's not sure,” he replied, looking down at her with gravity. They remained in this attitude for a moment, then he said:

“I might stop a bit. It's all right for an hour, I should think.”

She looked at him earnestly, then said in tones of deep disappointment and of fortitude: “No, Will, you must go. You'd better go——”

“It's a shame!” he murmured, standing a moment at a loose end. Then, glancing down the street to see he was alone, he put his arm round her waist and said in a difficult voice: “How goes it?”

She let him keep her for a moment, then he kissed her as if afraid of what he was doing. They were both uncomfortable.

“Well——!” he said at length.

“Good night!” she said, setting him free to go.

He hung a moment near her, as if ashamed. Then “Good night,” he answered, and he broke away. She listened to his footsteps in the night, before composing herself to turn indoors.

“Helloa!” said her father, glancing over his paper as she entered the dining-room. “What's up, then?”

“Oh, nothing,” she replied, in her calm tones. “Will won't be here to dinner tonight.”

“What, gone to the fair?”

“No.”

“Oh! What's got him then?”

Lois looked at her father, and answered:

“He's gone down to the factory. They are afraid of the hands.”

Her father looked at her closely.

“Oh, aye!” he answered, undecided, and they sat down to dinner.

### III

Lois retired very early. She had a fire in her bedroom. She drew the curtains and stood holding aside a heavy fold, looking out at the night. She could see only the nothingness of the fog; not even the glare of the fair was evident, though the noise clamoured small in the distance. In front of everything she could see her own faint image. She crossed to the dressing-table, and there leaned her face to the mirror, and looked at herself. She looked a long time, then she rose, changed her dress for a dressing-jacket, and took up Sesame and Lilies.

Late in the night she was roused from sleep by a bustle in the house. She sat up and heard a hurrying to and fro and the sound of anxious voices. She put on her dressing-gown and went out to her mother's room. Seeing her mother at the head of the stairs, she said in her quick, clean voice:

“Mother, what is it?”

“Oh, child, don't ask me! Go to bed, dear, do! I shall surely be worried out of my life.”

“Mother, what is it?” Lois was sharp and emphatic.

“I hope your father won't go. Now I do hope your father won't go. He's got a cold as it is.”

“Mother, tell me what is it?” Lois took her mother's arm.

“It's Selby's. I should have thought you would have heard the fire-engine, and Jack isn't in yet. I hope we're safe!” Lois returned to her bedroom and dressed. She coiled her plaited hair, and having put on a cloak, left the house.

She hurried along under the fog-dripping trees towards the meaner part of the town. When she got near, she saw a glare in the fog, and closed her lips tight. She hastened on till she was in the crowd. With peaked, noble face she watched the fire. Then she looked a little wildly over the fire-reddened faces in the crowd, and catching sight of her father, hurried to him.

“Oh, Dadda—is he safe? Is Will safe——?”

“Safe, aye, why not? You've no business here. Here, here's Sampson, he'll take you home. I've enough to bother me; there's my own place to watch. Go home now, I can't do with you here.”

“Have you seen Will?” she asked.

“Go home—Sampson, just take Miss Lois home—now!”

“You don't really know where he is—father?”

“Go home now—I don't want you here——” her father ordered peremptorily.

The tears sprang to Lois' eyes. She looked at the fire and the tears were quickly dried by fear. The flames roared and struggled upward. The great wonder of the fire made her forget even her indignation at her father's light treatment of herself and of her lover. There was a crashing and bursting of timber, as the first floor fell in a mass into the blazing gulf, splashing the fire in all directions, to the terror of the crowd. She saw the steel of the machines growing white-hot and twisting like flaming letters. Piece after piece of the flooring gave way, and the machines dropped in red ruin as the wooden framework burned out. The air became unbreathable; the fog was swallowed up; sparks went rushing up as if they would burn the dark heavens; sometimes cards of lace went whirling into the gulf of the sky, waving with wings of fire. It was dangerous to stand near this great cup of roaring destruction.

Sampson, the grey old manager of Buxton and Co's, led her away as soon as she would turn her face to listen to him. He was a stout, irritable man. He elbowed his way roughly through the crowd, and Lois followed him, her head high, her lips closed. He led her for some distance without speaking, then at last, unable to contain his garrulous irritability, he broke out:

“What do they expect? What can they expect? They can't expect to stand a bad time. They spring up like mushrooms as big as a house-side, but there's no stability in 'em. I remember William Selby when he'd run on my errands. Yes, there's some as can make much out of little, and there's some as can make much out of nothing, but they find it won't last. William Selby's sprung up in a day, and he'll vanish in a night. You can't trust to luck alone. Maybe he thinks it's a lucky thing this fire has come when things are looking black. But you can't get out of it as easy as that. There's been a few too many of 'em. No, indeed, a fire's the last thing I should hope to come to—the very last!”

Lois hurried and hurried, so that she brought the old manager panting in distress up the steps of her home. She could not bear to hear him talking so. They could get no one to open the door for some time. When at last Lois ran upstairs, she found her mother dressed, but



all unbuttoned again, lying back in the chair in her daughter's room, suffering from palpitation of the heart, with Sesame and Lilies crushed beneath her. Lois administered brandy, and her decisive words and movements helped largely to bring the good lady to a state of recovery sufficient to allow of her returning to her own bedroom.

Then Lois locked the door. She glanced at her fire-darkened face, and taking the flattened Ruskin out of the chair, sat down and wept. After a while she calmed herself, rose, and sponged her face. Then once more on that fatal night she prepared for rest. Instead, however, of retiring, she pulled a silk quilt from her disordered bed and wrapping it round her, sat miserably to think. It was two o'clock in the morning.

#### IV

The fire was sunk to cold ashes in the grate, and the grey morning was creeping through the half-opened curtains like a thing ashamed, when Lois awoke. It was painful to move her head: her neck was cramped. The girl awoke in full recollection. She sighed, roused herself and pulled the quilt closer about her. For a little while she sat and mused. A pale, tragic resignation fixed her face like a mask. She remembered her father's irritable answer to her question concerning her lover's safety—"Safe, aye—why not?" She knew that he suspected the factory of having been purposely set on fire. But then, he had never liked Will. And yet—and yet—Lois' heart was heavy as lead. She felt her lover was guilty. And she felt she must hide her secret of his last communication to her. She saw herself being cross-examined—"When did you last see this man?" But she would hide what he had said about watching at the works. How dreary it was—and how dreadful. Her life was ruined now, and nothing mattered any more. She must only behave with dignity, and submit to her own obliteration. For even if Will were never accused, she knew in her heart he was guilty. She knew it was over between them.

It was dawn among the yellow fog outside, and Lois, as she moved mechanically about her toilet, vaguely felt that all her days would arrive slowly struggling through a bleak fog. She felt an intense longing at this uncanny hour to slough the body's trammelled weariness and to issue at once into the new bright warmth of the far Dawn where a lover waited transfigured; it is so easy and pleasant in imagination to step out of the chill grey dampness of another terrestrial daybreak, straight into the sunshine of the eternal morning! And who can escape his hour? So Lois performed the meaningless routine of her toilet, which at last she made meaningful when she took her black dress, and fastened a black jet brooch at her throat.

Then she went downstairs and found her father eating a mutton chop. She quickly approached and kissed him on the forehead. Then she retreated to the other end of the table. Her father looked tired, even haggard.

"You are early," he said, after a while. Lois did not reply. Her father continued to eat for a few moments, then he said:

"Have a chop—here's one! Ring for a hot plate. Eh, what? Why not?"

Lois was insulted, but she gave no sign. She sat down and took a cup of coffee, making no pretence to eat. Her father was absorbed, and had forgotten her.

"Our Jack's not come home yet," he said at last.

Lois stirred faintly. "Hasn't he?" she said.

"No." There was silence for a time. Lois was frightened. Had something happened also to her brother? This fear was closer and more irksome.

"Selby's was cleaned out, gutted. We had a near shave of it——"

"You have no loss, Dadda?"

"Nothing to mention." After another silence, her father said:

"I'd rather be myself than William Selby. Of course it may merely be bad luck—you don't know. But whatever it was, I wouldn't like to add one to the list of fires just now. Selby was at the 'George' when it broke out—I don't know where the lad was——!"

"Father," broke in Lois, "why do you talk like that? Why do you talk as if Will had done it?" She ended suddenly. Her father looked at her pale, mute face.

"I don't talk as if Will had done it," he said. "I don't even think it."

Feeling she was going to cry, Lois rose and left the room. Her father sighed, and leaning his elbows on his knees, whistled faintly into the fire. He was not thinking about her.

Lois went down to the kitchen and asked Lucy, the parlour-maid, to go out with her. She somehow shrank from going alone, lest people should stare at her overmuch: and she felt an overpowering impulse to go to the scene of the tragedy, to judge for herself.

The churches were chiming half-past eight when the young lady and the maid set off down the street. Nearer the fair, swarthy, thin-legged men were pushing barrels of water towards the market-place, and the gipsy women, with hard brows, and dressed in tight velvet bodices, hurried along the pavement with jugs of milk, and great brass water ewers and loaves and breakfast parcels. People were just getting up, and in the poorer streets was a continual splash of tea-leaves, flung out on to

the cobble-stones. A teapot came crashing down from an upper story just behind Lois, and she, starting round and looking up, thought that the trembling, drink-bleared man at the upper window, who was stupidly staring after his pot, had had designs on her life; and she went on her way shuddering at the grim tragedy of life.

In the dull October morning the ruined factory was black and ghastly. The window-frames were all jagged, and the walls stood gaunt. Inside was a tangle of twisted débris, the iron, in parts red with bright rust, looking still hot; the charred wood was black and satiny; from dishevelled heaps, sodden with water, a faint smoke rose dimly. Lois stood and looked. If he had done that! He might even be dead there, burned to ash and lost for ever. It was almost soothing to feel so. He would be safe in the eternity which now she must hope in.

At her side the pretty, sympathetic maid chatted plaintively. Suddenly, from one of her lapses into silence, she exclaimed:

“Why if there isn't Mr Jack!”

Lois turned suddenly and saw her brother and her lover approaching her. Both looked soiled, untidy and wan. Will had a black eye, some ten hours old, well coloured. Lois turned very pale as they approached. They were looking gloomily at the factory, and for a moment did not notice the girls.

“I'll be jiggered if there ain't our Lois!” exclaimed Jack, the reprobate, swearing under his breath.

“Oh, God!” exclaimed the other in disgust.

“Jack, where have you been?” said Lois sharply, in keen pain, not looking at her lover. Her sharp tone of suffering drove her lover to defend himself with an affectation of comic recklessness.

“In quod,” replied her brother, smiling sickly.

“Jack!” cried his sister very sharply.

“Fact.”

Will Selby shuffled on his feet and smiled, trying to turn away his face so that she should not see his black eye. She glanced at him. He felt her boundless anger and contempt, and with great courage he looked straight at her, smiling ironically. Unfortunately his smile would not go over his swollen eye, which remained grave and lurid.

“Do I look pretty?” he inquired with a hateful twist of his lip.

“Very!” she replied.

“I thought I did,” he replied. And he turned to look at his father's ruined works, and he felt miserable and stubborn. The girl standing there so clean and out of it all! Oh, God, he felt sick. He turned to go home.

The three went together, Lois silent in anger and resentment. Her brother was tired and overstrung, but not suppressed. He chattered on blindly.

“It was a lark we had! We met Bob Osborne and Freddy Mansell coming down Poultry. There was girl with some geese. She looked a tanger sitting there, all like statues, her and the geese. It was Will who began it. He offered her three-pence and asked her to begin the show. She called him a—she called him something, and then somebody poked an old gander to stir him up, and somebody squirted him in the eye. He upped and squawked and started off with his neck out. Laugh! We nearly killed ourselves, keeping back those old birds with squirts and teasers. Oh, Lum! Those old geese, oh, scrimmy, they didn't know where to turn, they fairly went off their dots, coming at us right an' left, and such a row—it was fun, you never knew! Then the girl she got up and knocked somebody over the jaw, and we were right in for it. Well, in the end, Billy here got hold of her round the waist——”

“Oh, dry it up!” exclaimed Will bitterly.

Jack looked at him, laughed mirthlessly, and continued: “An' we said we'd buy her birds. So we got hold of one goose apiece—an' they took some holding, I can tell you—and off we set round the fair, Billy leading with the girl. The bloomin' geese squawked an' pecked. Laugh—I thought I should a' died. Well, then we wanted the girl to have her birds back—and then she fired up. She got some other chaps on her side, and there was a proper old row. The girl went tooth and nail for Will there—she was dead set against him. She gave him a black eye, by gum, and we went at it, I can tell you. It was a free fight, a beauty, an' we got run in. I don't know what became of the girl.”

Lois surveyed the two men. There was no glimmer of a smile on her face, though the maid behind her was sniggering. Will was very bitter. He glanced at his sweetheart and at the ruined factory.

“How's dad taken it?” he asked, in a biting, almost humble tone.

“I don't know,” she replied coldly. “Father's in an awful way. I believe everybody thinks you set the place on fire.”

Lois drew herself up. She had delivered her blow. She drew herself up in cold condemnation and for a moment enjoyed her complete revenge. He was

despicable, abject in his dishevelled, disfigured, unwashed condition.

"Aye, well, they made a mistake for once," he replied, with a curl of the lip.

Curiously enough, they walked side by side as if they belonged to each other. She was his conscience-keeper. She was far from forgiving him, but she was still farther from letting him go. And he walked at her side like a boy who had to be punished before he can be exonerated. He submitted. But there was a genuine bitter contempt in the curl of his lip.

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## The Chinese Nightingale

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Chinese Nightingale*, by Vachel Lindsay  
A Song in Chinese Tapestries

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,  
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead--  
Ended license, lust and play:  
Why do you iron the night away?  
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,  
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round.  
While the monster shadows glower and creep,  
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;  
"My breast with vision is satisfied,  
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,  
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."  
Then he lit five fire-crackers in a pan.  
"Pop, pop," said the fire-crackers, "cra-cra-crack."  
He lit a joss stick long and black.  
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;  
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,  
And this was the song of the gray small bird:  
"Where is the princess, loved forever,  
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;  
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,  
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.  
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,

And there on the snowy table wide  
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,  
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face....  
Yet she put away all form and pride,  
And laid her glimmering veil aside  
With a childlike smile for Chang and for me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,  
The table gleamed in a moonlit bower,  
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,  
Ironed and ironed, all alone.  
And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:  
"Have you forgotten....  
Deep in the ages, long, long ago,  
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand--  
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?  
We sold our grain in the peacock town  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown--  
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown....

"When all the world was drinking blood  
From the skulls of men and bulls  
And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,  
We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred spice-trees,  
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.  
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,  
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.  
Do you remember, ages after,  
At last the world we were born to own?  
You were the heir of the yellow throne--  
The world was the field of the Chinese man  
And we were the pride of the Sons of Han?  
We copied deep books and we carved in jade,  
And wove blue silks in the mulberry shade...."

"I remember, I remember  
That Spring came on forever,  
That Spring came on forever,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,  
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,  
Though dawn was bringing the western day,  
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away....  
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,  
The railroad-yard and the clock-tower bright,  
Demon clouds crossed ancient valleys;  
Across wide lotus-ponds of light

I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,  
Flourished her fan, her shimmering fan,  
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:  
"Do you remember,  
Ages after,  
Our palace of heart-red stone?  
Do you remember  
The little doll-faced children  
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,  
That came from all the empire  
Honoring the throne?--  
The loveliest fête and carnival  
Our world had ever known?  
The sages sat about us  
With their heads bowed in their beards,  
With proper meditation on the sight.  
Confucius was not born;  
We lived in those great days  
Confucius later said were lived aright....  
And this gray bird, on that day of spring,  
With a bright bronze breast, and a bronze-brown wing,  
Captured the world with his carolling.  
Late at night his tune was spent.  
Peasants,  
Sages,  
Children,  
Homeward went,  
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.  
We walked alone. Our hearts were high and free.  
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,  
I had a silvery name--do you remember  
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim--  
He bent to his work, ironing away;  
But she was arch, and knowing and glowing,  
And the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling ... darling ... darling ... darling ..."  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on a rustic shelf,  
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,  
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,  
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:  
"Back through a hundred, hundred years  
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,

Hear the howl of the silver seas,  
Hear the thunder.  
Hear the gongs of holy China  
How the waves and tunes combine  
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,  
Incantation old and fine:  
'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons,  
Red fire-crackers, and green fire-crackers,  
And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.'"

Then the lady, rosy-red,  
Turned to her lover Chang and said:  
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn  
When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,  
And worked a spell this great joss taught  
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?  
From the flag high over our palace home  
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam--  
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder  
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder.  
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.  
We mounted the back of that royal slave  
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.  
We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,  
We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.  
To our secret ivory house we were bourne.  
We looked down the wonderful wing-filled regions  
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.  
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;  
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist  
That we this hour regain--  
Song-fire for the brain.  
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,  
When you cried for your heart's new pain,  
What was my name in the dragon-mist,  
In the rings of rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.  
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:  
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,  
Soul of Chang, do you remember?--  
Ere you returned to the shining harbor  
There were pirates by ten thousand  
Descended on the town  
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,



Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.  
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.  
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;  
I stood upon the sand;  
With lifted hand I looked upon them  
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,  
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.  
Deep, deep below the bay, the sea-weed and the spray,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,  
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:  
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day  
When you flew like a courier on before  
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,  
And we drove the steed in your singing path--  
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath:  
And found our city all aglow,  
And knighted this joss that decked it so?  
There were golden fishes in the purple river  
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.  
There were golden junks in the laughing river,  
And silver junks and rainbow junks:  
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,  
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,  
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town  
By the black-lacquer gate  
Where walked in state  
The kind king Chang  
And his sweet-heart mate....  
With his flag-born dragon  
And his crown of pearl ... and ... jade,  
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,  
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,  
And priests who bowed them down to your song--  
By the city called Han, the peacock town,  
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,  
The nightingale town."

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,  
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,  
A vague, unravelling, final tune,  
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;  
Sang as though for the soul of him  
Who ironed away in that bower dim:--  
"I have forgotten  
Your dragons great,  
Merry and mad and friendly and bold.  
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.

I vaguely know  
There were heroes of old,  
Troubles more than the heart could hold,  
There were wolves in the woods  
Yet lambs in the fold,  
Nests in the top of the almond tree....  
The evergreen tree ... and the mulberry tree ...  
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,  
Years on years I but half-remember ...  
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,  
May and June, then dead December,  
Dead December, then again June.  
Who shall end my dream's confusion?  
Life is a loom, weaving illusion...  
I remember, I remember  
There were ghostly veils and laces...  
In the shadowy bowery places...  
With lovers' ardent faces  
Bending to one another,  
Speaking each his part.  
They infinitely echo  
In the red cave of my heart.  
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart.'  
They said to one another.  
They spoke, I think, of perils past.  
They spoke, I think, of peace at last.  
One thing I remember:  
Spring came on forever,  
Spring came on forever,"  
Said the Chinese nightingale.

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John J. Audubon (American, 1785-1851). *Ruby Throated Humming Bird*, 1828. Aquatint, approx.: 27 x 40 in. (68.6 x 101.6 cm). Brooklyn Museum, Gift of the estate of Emily Winthrop Miles, 64.98.14

## RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD

Project Gutenberg's *Birds Every Child Should Know*, by Neltje Blanchan

What child does not know the hummingbird, the jewelled midget that flashes through the garden, poises before a flower as if suspended in the air by magic, thrusts a needle-like bill into one cup of nectar after another, then whirs off out of sight in a trice? It is the smallest {184} bird we have. Suppose a fairy wished to pluck one for her dinner, as we should pluck a chicken; how large, do you think, would be the actual body of a hummingbird, without its feathers? Not much, if any, larger than a big bumble-bee, I venture to guess. Yet

this atom of animation travels from Panama to Quebec or beyond, and back again every year of its brief life, that it may live where flowers, and the minute insects that infest them, will furnish drink and meat the year around. So small a speck of a traveller cannot be seen in the sky by an enemy with the sharpest of eyes. Space quickly swallows it. A second after it has left your garden it will be out of sight. This mite of a migrant has plenty of stay-at-home relatives in the tropics--exquisite creatures they are--but the ruby-throat is the only hummingbird bold enough to venture into the eastern United States and Canada.

What tempts him so far north? You know that certain flowers depend upon certain insect friends to carry their pollen from blossom to blossom that they may set fertile seed; but did you know that certain other flowers depend upon the hummingbird? Only his tongue, that may be run out beyond his long, slender bill and turned around curves, could reach the drops of nectar in the tips of the wild columbine's five inverted horns of plenty. The {185} Monarda or bee-balm, too, hides a sweet sip in each of its red tubes for his special benefit. So does the coral honeysuckle. There are a few other flowers that cater to him, especially, by wearing his favourite colour, by hiding nectar so deep that only his long tongue can drain it, and by opening in orderly succession so that he shall fare well throughout the summer, not have a feast one month and a famine the next. In addition to these flowers in Nature's garden that minister to his needs, many that have been brought from the ends of the earth to our garden plots please him no less. The canna, nasturtium, phlox, trumpet-flower, salvia, and a host of others, delight his eye and his palate. Don't you think it is worth while to plant his favourites in your garden if only for the joy of seeing him about? He is wonderfully neighbourly, coming to the flower-beds or window-boxes with undaunted familiarity in the presence of the family. A hummingbird that lived in my garden sipped from a sprig of honeysuckle that I held in my hand. But the bird is not always so amiable by any means. A fierce duelist, he will lunge his rapier-like bill at another hummer with deadly thrusts. A battle of the midgets in mid-air is a sorry sight. You may know a male by the brilliant metallic-red feathers on his throat. His mate lacks these, but her brilliancy has another {186} outlet, for she is one of the most expert nest-builders in the world. An exquisitely dainty little cup of plant down, felted into a compact cradle and stuccoed with bits of lichen bound on by spider-web, can scarcely be told from a knot on the limb to which it is fastened. Two eggs, not larger than beans, in time give place to two downy hummers about the size of honey-bees. Perhaps you have seen pigeons pump food down the throats of their squabs? In this same way are baby hummingbirds fed. After about three weeks in the nest, the young are ready to fly; but they rest on perches the first month of their independence more than at any time afterward. No weak-footed relative of the swift could live long off the wing. It is goodbye to summer when the last hummingbird forsakes

our frost-nipped, northern gardens for happier hunting grounds far away.

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## THE GOLDEN BLACKBIRD

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Green Fairy Book*, by Various

Once upon a time there was a great lord who had three sons. He fell very ill, sent for doctors of every kind, even bonesetters, but they, none of them, could find out what was the matter with him, or even give him any relief. At last there came a foreign doctor, who declared that the Golden Blackbird alone could cure the sick man.

So the old lord despatched his eldest son to look for the wonderful bird, and promised him great riches if he managed to find it and bring it back.

The young man began his journey, and soon arrived at a place where four roads met. He did not know which to choose, and tossed his cap in the air, determining that the direction of its fall should decide him. After travelling for two or three days, he grew tired of walking without knowing where or for how long, and he stopped at an inn which was filled with merrymakers and ordered something to eat and drink.

‘My faith,’ said he, ‘it is sheer folly to waste more time hunting for this bird. My father is old, and if he dies I shall inherit his goods.’

The old man, after waiting patiently for some time, sent his second son to seek the Golden Blackbird. The youth took the same direction as his brother, and when he came to the cross roads, he too tossed up which road he should take. The cap fell in the same place as before, and he walked on till he came to the spot where his brother had halted. The latter, who was leaning out of the window of the inn, called to him to stay where he was and amuse himself.

‘You are right,’ replied the youth. ‘Who knows if I should ever find the Golden Blackbird, even if I sought the whole world through for it. At the worst, if the old man dies, we shall have his property.’

He entered the inn and the two brothers made merry and feasted, till very soon their money was all spent. They even owed something to their landlord, who kept them as hostages till they could pay their debts.

The youngest son set forth in his turn, and he arrived at the place where his brothers were still prisoners. They called to him to stop, and did all they could to prevent his going further.

‘No,’ he replied, ‘my father trusted me, and I will go all over the world till I find the Golden Blackbird.’

‘Bah,’ said his brothers, ‘you will never succeed any better than we did. Let him die if he wants to; we will divide the property.’

As he went his way he met a little hare, who stopped to look at him, and asked:

‘Where are you going, my friend?’

‘I really don’t quite know,’ answered he. ‘My father is ill, and he cannot be cured unless I bring him back the Golden Blackbird. It is a long time since I set out, but no one can tell me where to find it.’

‘Ah,’ said the hare, ‘you have a long way to go yet. You will have to walk at least seven hundred miles before you get to it.’

‘And how am I to travel such a distance?’

‘Mount on my back,’ said the little hare, ‘and I will conduct you.’

The young man obeyed: at each bound the little hare went seven miles, and it was not long before they reached a castle that was as large and beautiful as a castle could be.

‘The Golden Blackbird is in a little cabin near by,’ said the little hare, ‘and you will easily find it. It lives in a little cage, with another cage beside it made all of gold. But whatever you do, be sure not to put it in the beautiful cage, or everybody in the castle will know that you have stolen it.’

The youth found the Golden Blackbird standing on a wooden perch, but as stiff and rigid as if he was dead. And beside the beautiful cage was the cage of gold.

‘Perhaps he would revive if I were to put him in that lovely cage,’ thought the youth.

The moment that Golden Bird had touched the bars of the splendid cage he awoke, and began to whistle, so that all the servants of the castle ran to see what was the matter, saying that he was a thief and must be put in prison.

‘No,’ he answered, ‘I am not a thief. If I have taken the Golden Blackbird, it is only that it may cure my father, who is ill, and I have travelled more than seven hundred miles in order to find it.’

‘Well,’ they replied, ‘we will let you go, and will even give you the Golden Bird, if you are able to bring us the Porcelain Maiden.’

The youth departed, weeping, and met the little hare, who was munching wild thyme.

‘What are you crying for, my friend?’ asked the hare.

‘It is because,’ he answered, ‘the castle people will not allow me to carry off the Golden Blackbird without giving them the Porcelain Maiden in exchange.’

‘You have not followed my advice,’ said the little hare. ‘And you have put the Golden Bird into the fine cage.’

‘Alas! yes!’

‘Don’t despair! the Porcelain Maiden is a young girl, beautiful as Venus, who dwells two hundred miles from here. Jump on my back and I will take you there.’

The little hare, who took seven miles in a stride, was there in no time at all, and he stopped on the borders of a lake.

‘The Porcelain Maiden,’ said the hare to the youth, ‘will come here to bathe with her friends, while I just eat a mouthful of thyme to refresh me. When she is in the lake, be sure you hide her clothes, which are of dazzling whiteness, and do not give them back to her unless she consents to follow you.’

The little hare left him, and almost immediately the Porcelain Maiden arrived with her friends. She undressed herself and got into the water. Then the young man glided up noiselessly and laid hold of her clothes, which he hid under a rock at some distance.

When the Porcelain Maiden was tired of playing in the water she came out to dress herself, but, though she hunted for her clothes high and low, she could find them nowhere. Her friends helped her in the search, but, seeing at last that it was of no use, they left her, alone on the bank, weeping bitterly.

‘Why do you cry?’ said the young man, approaching her.

‘Alas!’ answered she, ‘while I was bathing someone stole my clothes, and my friends have abandoned me.’

‘I will find your clothes if you will only come with me.’

And the Porcelain Maiden agreed to follow him, and after having given up her clothes, the young man bought a small horse for her, which went like the wind. The little hare brought them both back to seek for the Golden Blackbird, and when they drew near to the castle where it lived the

little hero said to the young man:

‘Now, do be a little sharper than you were before, and you will manage to carry off both the Golden Blackbird and the Porcelain Maiden. Take the golden cage in one hand, and leave the bird in the old cage where he is, and bring that away too.’

The little hare then vanished; the youth did as he was bid, and the castle servants never noticed that he was carrying off the Golden Bird. When he reached the inn where his brothers were detained, he delivered them by paying their debt. They set out all together, but as the two elder brothers were jealous of the success of the youngest, they took the opportunity as they were passing by the shores of a lake to throw themselves upon him, seize the Golden Bird, and fling him in the water. Then they continued their journey, taking with them the Porcelain Maiden, in the firm belief that their brother was drowned. But, happily, he had snatched in falling at a tuft of rushes and called loudly for help. The little hare came running to him, and said ‘Take hold of my leg and pull yourself out of the water.’

When he was safe on shore the little hare said to him:

‘Now this is what you have to do: dress yourself like a Breton seeking a place as stable-boy, and go and offer your services to your father. Once there, you will easily be able to make him understand the truth.’

The young man did as the little hare bade him, and he went to his father’s castle and enquired if they were not in want of a stable-boy.

‘Yes,’ replied his father, ‘very much indeed. But it is not an easy place. There is a little horse in the stable which will not let anyone go near it, and it has already kicked to death several people who have tried to groom it.’

‘I will undertake to groom it,’ said the youth. ‘I never saw the horse I was afraid of yet.’ The little horse allowed itself to be rubbed down without a toss of its head and without a kick.

‘Good gracious!’ exclaimed the master; ‘how is it that he lets you touch him, when no one else can go near him?’

‘Perhaps he knows me,’ answered the stable-boy.

Two or three days later the master said to him: ‘The Porcelain Maiden is here: but, though she is as lovely as the dawn, she is so wicked that she scratches everyone that approaches her. Try if she will accept your services.’

When the youth entered the room where she was, the Golden Blackbird



broke forth into a joyful song, and the Porcelain Maiden sang too, and jumped for joy.

‘Good gracious!’ cried the master. ‘The Porcelain Maiden and the Golden Blackbird know you too?’

‘Yes,’ replied the youth, ‘and the Porcelain Maiden can tell you the whole truth, if she only will.’

Then she told all that had happened, and how she had consented to follow the young man who had captured the Golden Blackbird.

‘Yes,’ added the youth, ‘I delivered my brothers, who were kept prisoners in an inn, and, as a reward, they threw me into a lake. So I disguised myself and came here, in order to prove the truth to you.’

So the old lord embraced his son, and promised that he should inherit all his possessions, and he put to death the two elder ones, who had deceived him and had tried to slay their own brother.

The young man married the Porcelain Maiden, and had a splendid wedding-feast.

Sebillot.

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## ARRIVAL OF THE BIRDS.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *In Bird Land*, by Leander S. Keyser

Have any of my readers kept a record of the arrival of the birds during the spring? The northward procession of the battalions in feathers is an interesting study. Why do some birds begin their pilgrimage from the south so much earlier than others? What is there in their physical and mental make-up that gives them the northward impulse even before fair weather has come? Do they become homesick for their summer haunts sooner than their fellows? These are questions that are much more easily asked than answered. The size of the bird furnishes no clew to the solution, for some small birds are better able to resist the cold than many larger ones. There is the little black-capped titmouse—a mere mite of a bird—which generally remains in my neighborhood all winter, cheerfully braving the stormiest weather; while the brown thrasher, fully five times as large, is carefully warming his shins in the sunny south, and will not venture north until the spring has come to stay. Here, too, is Bewick’s wren on the first day of April,—with no thought of making an April fool of any one,—while the Baltimore orioles, rose-breasted grossbeaks, and scarlet tanagers, all larger than he, are tarrying in Georgia and Alabama. There is nothing in the size or color or form of the birds that makes this difference; it is doubtless in the blood.

I have kept a careful memorandum of the arrival of these feathered voyagers (this was during the spring of 1892), and know almost to a certainty the day, and sometimes the hour, when they cast anchor in this port. The winter had been unusually severe, and yet the migration began as early as the twenty-second of February, when the first meadow-larks put in appearance, and sent their wavering shafts of song across the frost-bound fields. They had left only on the last day of December, but had apparently remained away as long as they could. On the same day the killdeer plovers also arrived, making their presence known by their wailing cry. On the twenty-third I heard the \_Q-q-o-o-ka-l-e-e-e\_ of the red-winged blackbirds, and on the morning of the twenty-fourth the first robins dropped from the sky after a “flying trip” in the night from some more southern stopping-place; but the weather was too cold for them to sing. Yet the song-sparrows and meadow-larks defied the cold with their cheerful melody. While the robin is a very gay and lavish songster, he wants favorable weather for his vocal rehearsals, and a “cold snap” will easily discourage him. He is evidently somewhat of a fair-weather minstrel. It was on February twenty-eighth, a pleasant day, that I caught the first strain of robin melody.

The towhee buntings dropped anchor on the seventh of March, filling the woods with their fine, explosive trills. It was a pleasant day, a sort of oasis in the midst of the stormy weather, and it did not seem inapt to speculate a little as to the thoughts of these birds on their arrival at their old summer haunts, after an absence of four or five months. Was the old brush-heap, where they had built their nest the previous spring, still there? Had the winter storms spared the twig on the sapling where Cock Bunting had sung erstwhile his sweetest trills to his dusky mate? “What if the woodman has cleared away our pleasant corner of the woods?” whispers Mrs. Towhee to her lord as they approach the sequestered spot. How their hearts must bound with joy when they find sapling and brush-heap and winding woodway all as they had left them in the autumn! No wonder they are so tuneful! Even the snow-storms that moan and howl through the woods a few days later cannot wholly repress their exuberant feelings.

On the same date a whole colony of young song-sparrows stopped at this station on their journey northward, although you must remember that quite a number of their elders remained here through the winter. What a twittering these year-old sparrows made in the bushes fringing the woods! I actually laughed aloud at their crude, tuneless, quasi-musical efforts. They were not in good voice, and, besides, had not yet fully learned the tunes that are sung in sparrowdom, and could not control their vocal chords. They made many sorry and amusing attempts to chant and trill, but their voices would break and catch in the most remarkable ways, now sliding up too high in the scale, now sliding down too low, and now veering too much to one side, so to speak. One tyro, I observed, sang the first part of a run very well, almost as well, in fact, as an

adult musician could have sung it; but when he tried to finish, his voice seemed to fly all to flinders. He made the attempt again and again, but to no purpose. It was a day for which I have cut a notch in the tally-stick of memory. Leaving the company of young vocalists at their rehearsals at the border of the woods, I made my way to a swamp not far off, where a pleasant surprise lay in ambush. Here were no longer found young song-sparrows, but adults, and you should have heard them sing. What a contrast between the crude songs of the young birds and the loud, clear, splendidly intoned and executed trills of these trained musicians!

But I must return to the subject of migration. The fifteenth of March was a raw, blustering day, as its predecessors had been; but in the woods several fox-sparrows were singing, not their best, of course, but fairly well for such weather. They must have come during the night. But why had they come when the weather was so cold? Most birds wait until there is a bland air-current from the south on which they can ride triumphantly. Had this small band of fox-sparrows followed the example of a well-known American humorist, and gone to “roughing it”? Strange to say, I saw no more fox-sparrows until the twenty-eighth, when the weather had grown warm. That was also the day on which I saw the first winter wren scudding about in the brush-heaps and wood-piles and perking up his tail in the most approved bantam fashion. It may be a poor joke, but the thought came of its own accord, that if brevity is the soul of wit, this little wren must have a very witty tail; and it really is an amusing appendage, held up at an acute angle with the bird’s sloping back.

As I strolled along the edge of the woods on the same day, the fine rhythmic trill of the bush-sparrow reached my ear. He was celebrating his return to this sylvan resort, and his voice was in excellent trim; the fact is, I never heard him acquit himself quite so well, not even in May. Miss Lucy Larcom, of tender and sacred memory, has happily characterized this triller’s song in melodious verse:—

“One syllable, clear and soft  
As a raindrop’s silvery patter,  
Or a tinkling fairy-bell, heard aloft,  
In the midst of the merry chatter  
Of robin and linnet and wren and jay,—  
One syllable oft repeated;  
He has but a word to say,  
And of that he will not be cheated.”

But why was not the grass-finch, his relative of the fields, in just as good voice when he arrived on the thirty-first? The last two springs this bird had to be on his singing-grounds several days before he recovered his full powers of voice. On the twenty-ninth the phoebe came with his burden of sweet song, and the first of April brought Bewick’s

wren—sweet-voiced Arion of the suburbs—and the chipping sparrow, whose slender peal of song rang through my study window. Here my record stops for the present year; but by reference to my last year's notes (1891) it appears that Bewick's wren did not then arrive until April tenth, and chippy not until April twelfth. The difference in the seasons is doubtless the primary cause of this divergence in the time of arrival. April brings many other winged pilgrims,—the white-throated and white-crowned sparrows, the thrushes, the orioles, the tanagers, the cat-birds, the swallows and swifts, and some of the hardier warblers, while the great army of warblers delay their coming till the first and second weeks in May. And all the while we are having bird concerts, cantatas, oratorios, and opera festivals, mingled with some tragedy and a great deal of comedy, and there are love songs and cradle songs, matins and vespers, and twitterings expressive of every shade and variety of feeling.

I yield to the temptation to add a brief article entitled "Watching the Parade," which was published in a New England journal in the summer of 1893, and contains a record of some observations made during the previous spring. By comparison with the preceding part of this chapter, it will indicate the versatile character of bird study in the same season of different years. I shall give it almost verbatim as first published, hoping the rather "free and easy" style will be generously overlooked by critical readers.

Every spring and autumn for many years I have been watching the parade; not a parade of soldiers, or of civic orders, or even of a menagerie; but one of far more interest to the naturalist,—the procession of the army in feathers. A wonderful cortége it is, this army in bright array; and every time you witness it, you add something new to your knowledge of bird life. The last spring has been no exception, although, when the pageant began, I wondered if I should see any new birds or hear any new songs, and even felt a little doubtful about it.

But quite early a new bird was added to my list. It was the blue-winged warbler, which carries about a scientific name big enough to break its dainty back. Just think of calling a tiny bird *Helminthophila pinus*! But happily it does not know its own name, and, like some of my readers, would not be able to pronounce it if it did, and therefore no serious harm is done. This bird may be known by the bright olive-green of its back, the pale blue of its wings, the pure yellow of its under parts, and the narrow black line running back through its eye. It seemed to be quite wary, yet I got near enough to see it catch insects on the wing like a wood-pewee, as well as pick them from the leaves of the trees.

The bird student must sometimes let problems go unsolved. For nearly, perhaps quite a week, three or four large, heavy-beaked birds flitted

about in several tall tree-tops of the woods, but were so far up that, try as I would, I could not identify them even with my opera-glass. In my small collection of mounted birds there is a female evening grossbeak; and the tree-top flitters looked more like it than any other bird of my acquaintance. If they were evening grossbeaks, it was a rare find; for these birds are almost unknown in this part of the country, only a few having ever been discovered in this State. Their usual \_locale\_ is thought to be west of Lake Superior. I was sorely tempted to use a gun, but decided that it was just as well not to know some things as to massacre an innocent bird.

However, other finds were more satisfactory. Strolling through the woods one day, I caught the notes of a bird song that did not sound familiar. Surely it was a vireo's quaint, continuous lay; but which of the vireos could it be? It was different from any vireo minstrelsy I had ever heard. Peering about in the bushes for the author of those elusive notes, I at length espied a little bird form, and the next moment my glass revealed the blue-headed or solitary vireo. It was the first time I had ever heard this little vocalist sing in the spring, although we have met—he and I—on familiar terms every season for many years. Here is a query: Why was blue-head silent other years, and so tuneful that spring? For he was often heard after that day.

The song was varied and lively, sometimes running high in the scale, and had not that absent-minded air which marks the roundelay of the warbling vireo. It is much more intense and expressive, and some notes are quite like certain runs of the brown thrasher's song. The bird did two other things that were a surprise: he chattered and scolded much like the ruby-crowned kinglet. Then he caught a miller, and, as it was too large to be swallowed whole, placed it under his claws precisely like a chickadee or blue jay, and pulled it to pieces. This was a new trick to me, nor have I ever read, in any of the bird manuals, of his taking his dinner in this way.

The red-eyed vireo also chanted a little roundel that spring, as he pursued his journey northward, his song being slower in movement and less expressive and varied than that of his cousin just referred to.

Indeed, the procession seemed to be especially musical during that spring. One day, in the last week in April, a new style of music rang out at the border of the woods, and I fairly trembled lest the jolly soloist should scud away before I could identify him; but he had no intention of making his escape, and giving the credit of his vocal efforts to somebody else in the bird world. At length I got my glass upon him. He proved to be the purple finch,—rosy little Mozart that he was! For years he has passed through these woods with the vernal procession, but this was the first time he had ever been obliging enough to sing in my hearing. And what a rolling, rollicking little song it was, just as full of good cheer as bird song could be! He continued his

vocal rehearsal for many minutes on that day, but afterward he and his fellows were as mute as the inmates of a deaf and dumb asylum. A purple finch once sang here in the fall; but the music was quite harsh and squeaking, very different from his springtime melody.

One of the most beautiful birds that have a part in the vernal parade is the rose-breasted grosbeak,—a bird that you will recognize at once by his white-and-black coat and the rosy shield he so bravely bears on his bosom. In his summer home, farther north, I have often heard his vivacious music (this was in northern Indiana); but until the past spring he has always been silent as he passed through this neighborhood, save that he would sometimes utter his sharp, metallic \_Chip\_. However, on the fourteenth of May two of these grosbeaks sang a most vigorous duet in the grove near my house; and I wish you could have heard it, for it would have made you almost leap for joy, it was so jolly and rollicksome. At first you may be disposed to think the grosbeak's song much like the robin's, but you will soon find that it is finer in several respects, the tones being clearer and fuller, the utterance more rapid and varied, and the whole song much more spirited; and that is saying a good deal, considering Cock Robin's cheery carols. No one should fail to hear this rosy-breasted minstrel, whatever else he may miss. It will make him feel that life is worth living; that if God made this bird so happy, he must intend that his rational creatures, who are of more value than a bird, should also be cheerful.

Never were the birds so gentle and confiding as they were during that spring. A female redstart took up her residence in my yard for fully a week, flitting about in the trees and grape-arbor, seeking for nits and worms; and you are to remember that I live in town (though in the outskirts), with many houses and people about, and an electric car whirling along the street every few minutes. A dainty bay-breasted warbler—little witch!—kept the redstart company, letting me stand beneath the trees on whose lower branches she tilted, and watch her agile movements; yet one of my bird books declares that the bay-breasted warblers remain in the highest tree-tops of the woods! Both these birds occasionally uttered a trill.

The goldfinches, too, were very familiar. They came with the procession as far north as my neighborhood, but stopped here for the summer, instead of continuing their pilgrimage. Some of their brothers and sisters remained with me all winter. Within a few feet of my rear door stands a small apple-tree, in whose branches these feathered gold-flakes flashed about, and sang their childlike ditties, and one little madam fluttered in the leafy crotches of the twigs, fitting her body into them as if trying to see if they would make good nesting-sites; the while Sir Goldfinch sang and sang at the top of his voice. Several white-crowned sparrows also came to eat seeds thrown out into the back yard. These handsome sparrows were not shy, but perched on the fence or the trees, and trilled their sweet refrains.

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## In Spring, Santa Barbara

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Flame and Shadow*, by Sara Teasdale

I have been happy two weeks together,  
My love is coming home to me,  
Gold and silver is the weather  
And smooth as lapis is the sea.

The earth has turned its brown to green  
After three nights of humming rain,  
And in the valleys peck and preen  
Linnets with a scarlet stain.

High in the mountains all alone  
The wild swans whistle on the lakes,  
But I have been as still as stone,  
My heart sings only when it breaks.

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## STRAY BIRDS MENTIONS

Thus we are prepared for the very curious state of things in this large tract of land. Looking at New Zealand as it was a thousand years ago, we find there were no mammals living on it excepting a couple of bats and the seals (so-called sea lions, sea elephants, and others) which frequent its coasts. There were 180 species of birds, and many of these quite peculiar to the island. Many of the birds showed in the absence of any predatory enemies--there being no carnivorous quadrupeds to hunt them or their young--a tendency to lose the power of flight, and some had done so altogether. The gigantic, wingless Moas--allied to the ostrich and the cassawary--had grown up there, and were the masters of the situation. There were many species of these--one of great height--one fourth taller than the biggest known ostrich; others with short legs of monstrous thickness and strength. Allied to these are the four species of Kiwi or apteryx, still existing there. They are very strange wingless birds, about the size of a large Dorking fowl. The Kiwis are still in existence, but the Moas and some of the other flightless birds have died out since the arrival of the Maori man, who killed and ate them.

A bird which was believed sixty years ago both by the natives and white men to have become extinct, the Takahe, or Notornis, was known by its bones and from the traditions of the natives. Much to the delight of naturalists, four live specimens of it were obtained at intervals in the last century, the last as late as 1898. The beautiful dark plumage and thick and short beak, which is bright red, as are the

legs, are well known from the two specimens preserved in the Natural History Museum. The Notornis is a heavy, flightless "rail." Rails are remarkable for their size and variety in New Zealand, where there are twenty species, some of them very sluggish in flight, or like Notornis, flightless (the wood hens). Amongst the flightless birds of New Zealand is a duck, as helpless as the heaviest farmyard product, and yet a wild bird, and then there are the penguins, which swim with their wings, but never fly, and belong entirely to the southern hemisphere. Many species are found on the shores of New Zealand. Other noteworthy birds of New Zealand are the twelve kinds of cormorants, the wry-bill plover, the only bird in the world with its beak turned to one side, the practically flightless Kakapo, or ground parrot (Stringops), the Huia, a bird like a crow in appearance, whose male has a short straight beak, whilst the female has a long one, greatly curved; the detested Kea, the parrot which kills the sheep, introduced by the colonists, by digging out with its beak from their backs the fat round the kidneys; also very peculiar owls and wrens, and the fine singing bell-birds.

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *More Science From an Easy Chair*, by Sir E. Ray (Edwin Ray) Lankester

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The city of Mandan lies in Morton County just across the Missouri River from Bismarck. Most of the birds here are about the same as on the other side of the river, but there are some important exceptions.

To reach the best spots, take I-94 west to Mandan and turn off onto Main Street (I-94/Highway 10 Business Loop). Turn left (south) on 6th Avenue Southeast at the sign to Fort Lincoln State Park. This street becomes Highway 1806 and leads to most of the better birding spots.

Fort Lincoln State Park (about four miles south of Mandan) is worth a visit. It is not a particularly good spot for birds, although you will probably find typical upland species present. The most interesting feature of the park is its historical significance. There are three important sites: 1) the Slant Indian Village, which was once occupied by the Mandan Indians, 2) Fort McKeen Infantry Post, which was occupied by the 6th Infantry, and 3) Fort Abraham Lincoln, home of the colorful George Armstrong Custer and his famous 7th Cavalry. The two military posts were active in the late 1800's. The park also offers an interpretive museum, picnic sites, and several modern camping sites (complete with electrical hook-ups).

Continue south on Highway 1806 for 6.0 miles to the Little Heart River. Turn left on an unmarked side road just north of the bridge. This passes under an old railway trestle and through a field of alfalfa and tall wheat grass. A colony of Sedge Wrens has nested here in recent years. This area is also dependable for Gray Partridge, Bobolink, American



Goldfinch, Dickcissel, and Grasshopper Sparrow. At the field's edge and in the woods look for Cedar Waxwing, Veery, Yellow-breasted Chat, Northern and Orchard Orioles, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, and other typical bottomland birds.

Several roads lead from Highway 1806 down to the river, some of which you may want to take in order to look for bottomlands species and migrants. Some 4.0 miles past the Little Heart River Bridge, a small road leads left to a good point for Piping Plover and Little Terns.

Another interesting spot is 6.8 miles past the bridge. Here, you will enter a small badlands with several severely eroded buttes, much like those in the extreme western part of the state. Watch for Turkey Vulture, Swainson's and Ferruginous Hawks, Western Kingbirds, and Say's Phoebes (rare; look near old buildings). Rock Wrens can be surprisingly common. The best way to find them is to park and walk past eroded buttes. It is just a matter of watching and listening for their distinctive series of trills.

[Illustration: Rock Wren]

A great place for winter birding is the Northern Great Plains Research Station in Mandan. To reach it, continue west on Main Street past Highway 1806 and turn left after one mile on Highway 6 (8th Street Northwest). Cross the railroad trestle and continue on 10th Avenue Southwest for 0.8 mile to a bridge. Just beyond, turn right at the sign.

These grounds are good for winter birding because of the conifers. Look for all of the regular winter species and for invaders such as Cedar and Bohemian Waxwings, Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, Pine (rare) and Evening Grosbeaks, Red Crossbills, and Golden-crowned Kinglets. The Townsend's Solitaire, although rare, has been a fairly frequent visitor in recent years. The trees are good also for roosting owls. With luck, you may even turn up a Long-eared Owl.

Project Gutenberg's *A Birder's Guide to North Dakota*, by Kevin J. Zimmer

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## MOULTING—LOSS OF FEATHERS

It is normal for a bird to replace its feathers with new growth each year. Moulting usually starts in July, but the actual date may vary in different climates. A complete moult may take about three months. It is not a disease, but the drain on the vitality of the bird requires that he be given particular care and special supplementary feeding. The first symptoms to be noticed are a general lassitude and drowsiness followed in a few days by a loose feather or two on the floor of the cage. In order that this normal yearly occurrence will proceed as uneventfully as possible, we suggest the following procedure:

Keep a French's Bird Biscuit and Cuttle Bone in the cage at all times, and add eight to ten drops of French's Iron Compound to the drinking water occasionally. By way of supplemental feeding, add about ¼ teaspoonful of either flaxseeds or niger seeds to the French's Bird Seed daily. Two or three times a week give a portion of hard cooked egg that has been mixed with toasted bread crumbs, etc., see under "Egg Food," in "General Care" section. About half a teaspoonful should be sufficient with each feeding. In addition, feed French's Moulting Food in place of French's Song Food two or three times a week and continue the cultivated and wild green foods. It is normal for most males to lose their song during the moult. They usually start singing again within a few weeks after the new feathers appear.

When song is first resumed the adult bird may sing much like a baby bird. However, the volume should increase to its full capacity within a short time.

Spring hatched canaries going through their first moult usually shed only the soft body feathers. Only after a canary is a year old does it shed the tail and wing feathers as well as the body feathers.

Birds have been known to skip the entire moult and apparently be none the worse for it. Also, some canaries continue to sing right through the whole process, with no interruption.

Loss of feathers at other than the regular moult indicates a weakened condition and is not normal or desirable. Sometimes referred to as soft moult, this condition may be due to interruptions of the bird's sleep when a light in the room is turned on and off at night. Wrong feeding is an important cause, and keeping the bird in a hot, steamy atmosphere will also lead to this trouble.

Feed freshly made egg food, as above, daily for two weeks or so, and place French's Iron Compound in its drinking water (10 drops daily) for the same period. See that the cage location is changed if it is in a room that is too warm, even for brief periods, as is usual in a kitchen. The cage should also be moved if it is where the bird might be disturbed several times during the night. Examine for lice and make sure that mice are not keeping your bird awake by climbing into his cage for seed and water.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *All About Your Canary*, by R. T. French Company

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In autumn and in spring a variety of summer visitants, mostly warblers, pass through London, delaying a little in its green spaces. In September we are hardly cognisant of these small strangers within our gates, all but one or two being silent at that season. In April and May, in

many of the parks, we may hear the chiffchaff, willow-wren, blackcap, sedge-warbler, the whitethroat, occasionally the cuckoo, and a few other rarer species, but they sing little, and soon leave us to seek better breeding-sites than the inner parks offer.

While some of our birds, as we have seen, forsake us at the approach of cold weather, some for a short period, others to remain away until the following spring, a small contrary movement of birds into London is going on. These winterers with us come not in battalions and are little remarked. They are to be found, a few here and a few there, all over London, wherever there are trees and bushes, but less in the public parks than in private grounds, cemeteries, and other quiet spots. Thus, during the last two exceptionally mild winters a few skylarks have lived contentedly in the comparatively small green area at Lambeth Palace. Nunhead Cemetery is a favourite winter resort of a number of small birds--starlings, chaffinches, and greenfinches, and a few of other species. Chaffinches are found in winter in several of the open spaces where they do not breed, and among other species to be found wintering in the quiet green spots in small numbers are linnets, goldfinches, pipits, and the pied wagtail.

In exceptionally severe winters birds come into London in considerable numbers--rooks, starlings, larks, blackbirds and thrushes, finches, and other small species--and they then visit not only the parks but all the squares and private gardens. During the big frost of 1890-1 skylarks were seen every day searching for food on the Thames Embankment. These strangers all vanish from London on the break-up of the frost.

During the late autumn and winter months a few large birds occasionally appear--heron, mallard, widgeon, teal, &c. As a rule they come and go during the dark hours. The sight of water and the cries of the ornamental water-fowl attract them. They are mostly irregular visitors, and cannot very well be included in the list of London birds.

The case of the black-headed gull is different, as this species may now be classed with the regular visitors, and not merely to the outlying spaces, like the fieldfare, but to the central parks of the metropolis, where, like the wood-pigeon, he looks to man for food.

The black-headed gull has always been a winter visitor in small numbers to the lower reaches of the Thames, coming up the river as far as London Bridge. In severe winters more birds come; thus, in the winter of 1887-8 they appeared in great numbers, and ranged as high up as Putney. The late Mr. Tristram-Valentine, in describing this visitation, wrote: 'It is seldom, indeed, that these birds appeared in such numbers in the Thames above London Bridge as they have done lately, and their appearance has, from its rarity, caused a corresponding excitement among Londoners, as is proved by the numbers of people that have crowded the bridges and embankments to watch their movements. To a considerable

portion of these, no doubt, the marvellous flight and power of wing of the gull came as an absolute revelation.'

Gulls came up the river in still greater force during the exceptionally long and severe frost of 1892-3. That was a memorable season in the history of the London gulls. Then, for the last time, gulls were shot on the river between the bridges, and this pastime put a stop to by the police magistrates, who fined the sportsmen for the offence of discharging firearms to the public danger. And then for the first time, so far as I know, the custom of regularly feeding the gulls in London had its beginning. Every day for a period of three to four weeks hundreds of working men and boys would take advantage of the free hour at dinner time to visit the bridges and embankments, and give the scraps left from their meal to the birds. The sight of this midday crowd hurrying down to the waterside with welcome in their faces and food in their hands must have come 'as an absolute revelation' to the gulls.

During the memorable frost of 1894-5 the birds again appeared in immense numbers, and would doubtless have soon left us, or else perished of cold and hunger on the snow-covered hummocks of ice which filled the Thames and gave it so arctic an aspect, but for the quantities of food cast to them every day. As in previous years when gulls have visited the Thames in considerable numbers, many of the birds found their way into the parks, and were especially numerous in St. James's Park, where they formed the habit of feeding with the ornamental water-fowl.

We have since experienced three exceptionally mild winters, so that the gulls were not driven by want to invade us; but they have come to us nevertheless, not having forgotten the generous hospitality London extended to them in the frost. St. James's Park has now become the favourite wintering place of a considerable number of birds, and their habit is to spend the day on the lake, feeding on the broken bread and scraps of meat thrown to them from the bridge, and leaving about sunset to spend the night on the river. In the autumn of 1896, three or four days after the gulls began to appear on the Thames, a body of two or three hundred of these birds settled down in the park water, and fed there every day and all day long until the following spring--March 1897.

A favourite pastime of mine during the winter months was to feed these park gulls with sprats, which were plentiful and could be bought anywhere for one penny a pound, or in quantities for about a farthing the pound. Gulls cannot live by bread alone; it is true that even in London they do not, like the blubber-eating Greenlander, spew it out of their mouths, for they will eat almost anything, but it is not partaken of with zest, and even with a crop-full they do not feel that they have dined. However much bread they had had, no sooner would they see the silvery gleam of a little tossed-up sprat than there would be a universal scream of excitement, a rush from all sides, and the whole white vociferous crowd would be gathered before me, almost brushing my

face with their wings, sweeping round and round, joyfully feasting on the little fishes, cast to them in showers, to be deftly caught before they touched the water.

A very few days before writing this chapter end, on January 30, 1898, I passed by the water and saw the gulls there, where indeed they have spent most of the daylight hours since the first week in October. It was a rough wild morning; the hurrying masses of dark cloud cast a gloom below that was like twilight; and though there was no mist the trees and buildings surrounding the park appeared vague and distant. The water, too, looked strange in its intense blackness, which was not hidden by the silver-grey light on the surface, for the surface was everywhere rent and broken by the wind, showing the blackness beneath. Some of the gulls--about 150 I thought--were on the water together in a close flock, tailing off to a point, all with their red beaks pointing one way to the gale. Seeing them thus, sitting high as their manner is, tossed up and down with the tumbling water, yet every bird keeping his place in the company, their whiteness and buoyancy in that dark setting was quite wonderful. It was a picture of black winter and beautiful wild bird life which would have had a rare attraction even in the desert places of the earth; in London it could not be witnessed without feelings of surprise and gratitude.

We see in this punctual return of the gulls, bringing their young with them, that a new habit has been acquired, a tradition formed, which has given to London a new and exceedingly beautiful ornament, of more value than many works of art.

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Birds in London*, by W. H. Hudson

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## THE FORBIDDEN BUZZARDS

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *Beasts and Super-Beasts*, by Saki

“Is matchmaking at all in your line?”

Hugo Peterby asked the question with a certain amount of personal interest.

“I don’t specialise in it,” said Clovis; “it’s all right while you’re doing it, but the after-effects are sometimes so disconcerting—the mute reproachful looks of the people you’ve aided and abetted in matrimonial experiments. It’s as bad as selling a man a horse with half a dozen latent vices and watching him discover them piecemeal in the course of the hunting season. I suppose you’re thinking of the Coulterneb girl. She’s certainly jolly, and quite all right as far as looks go, and I believe a certain amount of money adheres to her. What I don’t see is how you will ever manage to propose to her. In all the time I’ve known her I don’t remember her to have stopped talking for three consecutive minutes. You’ll have to race her six times round the grass paddock for a bet, and then blurt your proposal out before she’s got her wind back. The paddock is laid up for hay, but if you’re really in love with her you won’t let a consideration of that sort stop you, especially as it’s not your hay.”

“I think I could manage the proposing part right enough,” said Hugo, “if I could count on being left alone with her for four or five hours. The

trouble is that I'm not likely to get anything like that amount of grace. That fellow Lanner is showing signs of interesting himself in the same quarter. He's quite heartbreakingly rich and is rather a swell in his way; in fact, our hostess is obviously a bit flattered at having him here. If she gets wind of the fact that he's inclined to be attracted by Betty Coulterneb she'll think it a splendid match and throw them into each other's arms all day long, and then where will my opportunities come in? My one anxiety is to keep him out of the girl's way as much as possible, and if you could help me—"

"If you want me to trot Lanner round the countryside, inspecting alleged Roman remains and studying local methods of bee culture and crop raising, I'm afraid I can't oblige you," said Clovis. "You see, he's taken something like an aversion to me since the other night in the smoking-room."

"What happened in the smoking-room?"

"He trotted out some well-worn chestnut as the latest thing in good stories, and I remarked, quite innocently, that I never could remember whether it was George II. or James II. who was so fond of that particular story, and now he regards me with politely-draped dislike. I'll do my best for you, if the opportunity arises, but it will have to be in a roundabout, impersonal manner."

\* \* \* \* \*

"It's so nice having Mr. Lanner here," confided Mrs. Olston to Clovis the next afternoon; "he's always been engaged when I've asked him before. Such a nice man; he really ought to be married to some nice girl. Between you and me, I have an idea that he came down here for a certain reason."

"I've had much the same idea," said Clovis, lowering his voice; "in fact, I'm almost certain of it."

"You mean he's attracted by—" began Mrs. Olston eagerly.

"I mean he's here for what he can get," said Clovis.

"For what he can \_get\_?" said the hostess with a touch of indignation in her voice; "what do you mean? He's a very rich man. What should he want to get here?"

"He has one ruling passion," said Clovis, "and there's something he can get here that is not to be had for love nor for money anywhere else in the country, as far as I know."

"But what? Whatever do you mean? What is his ruling passion?"

“Egg-collecting,” said Clovis. “He has agents all over the world getting rare eggs for him, and his collection is one of the finest in Europe; but his great ambition is to collect his treasures personally. He stops at no expense nor trouble to achieve that end.”

“Good heavens! The buzzards, the rough-legged buzzards!” exclaimed Mrs. Olston; “you don’t think he’s going to raid their nest?”

“What do you think yourself?” asked Clovis; “the only pair of rough-legged buzzards known to breed in this country are nesting in your woods. Very few people know about them, but as a member of the league for protecting rare birds that information would be at his disposal. I came down in the train with him, and I noticed that a bulky volume of Dresser’s ‘Birds of Europe’ was one of the requisites that he had packed in his travelling-kit. It was the volume dealing with short-winged hawks and buzzards.”

Clovis believed that if a lie was worth telling it was worth telling well.

“This is appalling,” said Mrs. Olston; “my husband would never forgive me if anything happened to those birds. They’ve been seen about the woods for the last year or two, but this is the first time they’ve nested. As you say, they are almost the only pair known to be breeding in the whole of Great Britain; and now their nest is going to be harried by a guest staying under my roof. I must do something to stop it. Do you think if I appealed to him—”

Clovis laughed.

“There is a story going about, which I fancy is true in most of its details, of something that happened not long ago somewhere on the coast of the Sea of Marmora, in which our friend had a hand. A Syrian nightjar, or some such bird, was known to be breeding in the olive gardens of a rich Armenian, who for some reason or other wouldn’t allow Lanner to go in and take the eggs, though he offered cash down for the permission. The Armenian was found beaten nearly to death a day or two later, and his fences levelled. It was assumed to be a case of Mussulman aggression, and noted as such in all the Consular reports, but the eggs are in the Lanner collection. No, I don’t think I should appeal to his better feelings if I were you.”

“I must do something,” said Mrs. Olston tearfully; “my husband’s parting words when he went off to Norway were an injunction to see that those birds were not disturbed, and he’s asked about them every time he’s written. Do suggest something.”

“I was going to suggest picketing,” said Clovis.



“Picketing! You mean setting guards round the birds?”

“No; round Lanner. He can’t find his way through those woods by night, and you could arrange that you or Evelyn or Jack or the German governess should be by his side in relays all day long. A fellow guest he could get rid of, but he couldn’t very well shake off members of the household, and even the most determined collector would hardly go climbing after forbidden buzzards’ eggs with a German governess hanging round his neck, so to speak.”

Lanner, who had been lazily watching for an opportunity for prosecuting his courtship of the Coulterneb girl, found presently that his chances of getting her to himself for ten minutes even were non-existent. If the girl was ever alone he never was. His hostess had changed suddenly, as far as he was concerned, from the desirable type that lets her guests do nothing in the way that best pleases them, to the sort that drags them over the ground like so many harrows. She showed him the herb garden and the greenhouses, the village church, some water-colour sketches that her sister had done in Corsica, and the place where it was hoped that celery would grow later in the year.

He was shown all the Aylesbury ducklings and the row of wooden hives where there would have been bees if there had not been bee disease. He was also taken to the end of a long lane and shown a distant mound whereon local tradition reported that the Danes had once pitched a camp. And when his hostess had to desert him temporarily for other duties he would find Evelyn walking solemnly by his side. Evelyn was fourteen and talked chiefly about good and evil, and of how much one might accomplish in the way of regenerating the world if one was thoroughly determined to do one’s utmost. It was generally rather a relief when she was displaced by Jack, who was nine years old, and talked exclusively about the Balkan War without throwing any fresh light on its political or military history. The German governess told Lanner more about Schiller than he had ever heard in his life about any one person; it was perhaps his own fault for having told her that he was not interested in Goethe. When the governess went off picket duty the hostess was again on hand with a not-to-be-gainsaid invitation to visit the cottage of an old woman who remembered Charles James Fox; the woman had been dead for two or three years, but the cottage was still there. Lanner was called back to town earlier than he had originally intended.

Hugo did not bring off his affair with Betty Coulterneb. Whether she refused him or whether, as was more generally supposed, he did not get a chance of saying three consecutive words, has never been exactly ascertained. Anyhow, she is still the jolly Coulterneb girl.

The buzzards successfully reared two young ones, which were shot by a local hairdresser.

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## WHO IS KING OF BIRDS?

Internet Archive's *Where Animals Talk: West African Folk Lore Tales*

All the Birds had their dwelling-place in a certain country of Njambi's Kingdom. The pelicans, chickens, eagles, parrots and all other winged kinds all lived together, separated from other animals, in that country under the Great Lord Njambi.

One day, they were discussing together on the question, "Who is King of the Birds?" They all, each one, named himself, e. g. y the Chicken said, "I!;" the Parrot, "I!" the Eagle "I!" and so on. Every day they had this same discussion. They were not able to settle it, or to agree to choose any one of their number. So, they said, "'Let us go to Ra-Njambi, and refer the question to him." They agreed; and all went to him so that he might name who was the superior among them. When they all had arrived at Njambi's Town, he asked, '\* What is the affair on which you have come?' They replied, "We have come together here, not to visit, but for a purpose. We have a discussion and a doubt among ourselves. We wish to know, of all the Birds, who is Head or Chief. Each one says for himself that he is the superior. This one, because he knows how to fly well; that one because he can speak well; and another one, because he is strong. But, of these three things, — ^flight, speech, and strength, we ask you, which is the greatest?"

Immediately all the Birds began a competition, each one saying, "' Choose me; I know how to speak!" Njambi sikned them, and bade them, "Well, then, come here! I know that you all speak. But, show me, each one of you, your manner of speaking. "

So Eagle stood up to be examined. Njambi asked him, "How do you speak? What is your manner of talking?" Eagle began to scream, "So-o-we! so-o-we! so-o-we!" Njambi said» "Good! Now call me your wife!" The wife of Eagle came, and Njambi said to her, "You are the wife of Ngwanynyni, how do you talk? " The wife replied, " I say, \* So-o-we ! So-o-we! So-o-we!" " Ra-Njambi said to Eagle, "Indeed! you and your wife speak the same kind of language. " Eagle answered, "Yes; I and my wife, we speak alike." They were ordered, "Sit you aside."

Then Ra-Njambi directed, "Bring me here Ngozo. " And

he asked, "Ngozo, how do you talk? What is your way of speaking?" Parrot squawked, "I say, \*Ko-do-ko!" " Ra-Njambi ordered, "Well, call me your wife!" She came; and he asked her, "How do you talk? Talk now!" The wife replied, "I say, 'Ko-do-ko!'" Njambi asked Parrot, "So! your wife says, \*Ko-do-ko?" " Parrot answered "Yes; my wife and I both say, \* Ko-do-ko. ' "

Njambi then ordered, "Call me here, Ugulungu." He came, and was asked, "And how do you talk?" He shouted, "I say, \*Mbru-kd-kd! mbru-kd-kft! mbru! " Njambi told him, " CaU me your wife ! " She came, and, when asked, spoke in the same way as her husband. Njambi dismissed them, "Good ! you and your wife say the same thing. Good ! "

So, all the Birds, in succession, were summoned; and they all, husband and wife, had the same mode of speaking, except one who had i^ot hitherto been called.

Njambi finaUy said, "CaU Njdgdni here!" The Cock stood up, and strutted forward. Njambi asked him, "What is your speech? Show me your mode of talking!" Cock threw up his head, stretched his throat, and crowed, "K&-kd-re-kM." Njambi said, "Good! summon your wife hither." The wife came; and, of her, Njambi asked, "And, what do you say?" She demurely replied, "My husband told me that I might talk only if I bore children. So, when I lay an egg, I say \*Kwa-ka! Kwa-ka!" " Njambi exclaimed, "So! you don't say, 'K&-kd-re-k&&,'like your husband?" She replied, "No, I do not talk as he. "

Then Njambi said to Cock, "For what reason do you not allow your wife to say, \*Kd-kd-re-k&d?\*" Cock replied, "I am Nj4gdni, I respect myself. I jeer at all these other birds. Their wives and themselves speak only in the same way. A visitor, if he comes to their towns, is not able to know, when one of them speaks, which is husband and which is wife, because they both speak alike. But I, Nj^dni, as to my wife» she is unable to speak as I do. I do not allow it. A husband should be at the head; and in his wife it is not becoming for her to be equal with him or to talk as well as he does."

Njambi listened to this long speech; and then inquired, "Have you finished?" Chicken answered, "Yes."

Njambi summoned all the Birds to stand together in one place near him, and he said, "The affair which you brought to me, I settle it thus: — ^Njig&ni is your Head; because you

others all speak, husband and wife, each alike. But, he speaks for himself in his own way, and his wife in her way; to show that a husband has priority and superiority over a wife. Therefore, as he knows how to be Head of his family, it is settled that Nj&g^ni is Head also of your Tribe. "

But, Njambi went on to say, "Thou^ this is true, you, Nj&gdni, don't you go back again into the Forest, to your Kingship of the Birds. For tibe other birds will be jealous of you. You are not strong, you cannot fight them all. Lest they kill you, stay with me in my Town. "

Cock went to get his wife and children, and returned and remained there with Ra-Njambi. Therefore, the original bird to dwell among Mankind was the chicken.

When the other Birds scattered and went back to their own forest country without their king, they said, "Let it be so! We will not choose another King. Our Elng has left us, and has emigrated to another country, and has sat down in Njambi's Town."

So, the Birds have lived in the forest without any King.

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## THE HALF-CHICK

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Green Fairy Book*, by Various

Once upon a time there was a handsome black Spanish hen, who had a large brood of chickens. They were all fine, plump little birds, except the youngest, who was quite unlike his brothers and sisters. Indeed, he was such a strange, queer-looking creature, that when he first chipped his shell his mother could scarcely believe her eyes, he was so different from the twelve other fluffy, downy, soft little chicks who nestled under her wings. This one looked just as if he had been cut in two. He had only one leg, and one wing, and one eye, and he had half a head and half a beak. His mother shook her head sadly as she looked at him and said:

‘My youngest born is only a half-chick. He can never grow up a tall handsome cock like his brothers. They will go out into the world and rule over poultry yards of their own; but this poor little fellow will always have to stay at home with his mother.’ And she called him Medio Pollito, which is Spanish for half-chick.

Now though Medio Pollito was such an odd, helpless-looking little thing, his mother soon found that he was not at all willing to remain under her

wing and protection. Indeed, in character he was as unlike his brothers and sisters as he was in appearance. They were good, obedient chickens, and when the old hen chucked after them, they chirped and ran back to her side. But Medio Pollito had a roving spirit in spite of his one leg, and when his mother called to him to return to the coop, he pretended that he could not hear, because he had only one ear.

When she took the whole family out for a walk in the fields, Medio Pollito would hop away by himself, and hide among the Indian corn. Many an anxious minute his brothers and sisters had looking for him, while his mother ran to and fro cackling in fear and dismay.

As he grew older he became more self-willed and disobedient, and his manner to his mother was often very rude, and his temper to the other chickens very disagreeable.

One day he had been out for a longer expedition than usual in the fields. On his return he strutted up to his mother with the peculiar little hop and kick which was his way of walking, and cocking his one eye at her in a very bold way he said:

‘Mother, I am tired of this life in a dull farmyard, with nothing but a dreary maize field to look at. I’m off to Madrid to see the King.’

‘To Madrid, Medio Pollito!’ exclaimed his mother; ‘why, you silly chick, it would be a long journey for a grown-up cock, and a poor little thing like you would be tired out before you had gone half the distance. No, no, stay at home with your mother, and some day, when you are bigger, we will go a little journey together.’

But Medio Pollito had made up his mind, and he would not listen to his mother’s advice, nor to the prayers and entreaties of his brothers and sisters.

‘What is the use of our all crowding each other up in this poky little place?’ he said. ‘When I have a fine courtyard of my own at the King’s palace, I shall perhaps ask some of you to come and pay me a short visit,’ and scarcely waiting to say good-bye to his family, away he stumped down the high road that led to Madrid.

‘Be sure that you are kind and civil to everyone you meet,’ called his mother, running after him; but he was in such a hurry to be off, that he did not wait to answer her, or even to look back.

A little later in the day, as he was taking a short cut through a field, he passed a stream. Now the stream was all choked up, and overgrown with weeds and water-plants, so that its waters could not flow freely.

‘Oh! Medio Pollito,’ it cried, as the half-chick hopped along its banks,

‘do come and help me by clearing away these weeds.’

‘Help you, indeed!’ exclaimed Medio Pollito, tossing his head, and shaking the few feathers in his tail. ‘Do you think I have nothing to do but to waste my time on such trifles? Help yourself, and don’t trouble busy travellers. I am off to Madrid to see the King,’ and hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, away stumped Medio Pollito.

A little later he came to a fire that had been left by some gipsies in a wood. It was burning very low, and would soon be out.

‘Oh! Medio Pollito,’ cried the fire, in a weak, wavering voice as the half-chick approached, ‘in a few minutes I shall go quite out, unless you put some sticks and dry leaves upon me. Do help me, or I shall die!’

‘Help you, indeed!’ answered Medio Pollito. ‘I have other things to do. Gather sticks for yourself, and don’t trouble me. I am off to Madrid to see the King,’ and hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, away stumped Medio Pollito.

The next morning, as he was getting near Madrid, he passed a large chestnut tree, in whose branches the wind was caught and entangled. ‘Oh! Medio Pollito,’ called the wind, ‘do hop up here, and help me to get free of these branches. I cannot come away, and it is so uncomfortable.’

‘It is your own fault for going there,’ answered Medio Pollito. ‘I can’t waste all my morning stopping here to help you. Just shake yourself off, and don’t hinder me, for I am off to Madrid to see the King,’ and hoppity-kick, hoppity-kick, away stumped Medio Pollito in great glee, for the towers and roofs of Madrid were now in sight. When he entered the town he saw before him a great splendid house, with soldiers standing before the gates. This he knew must be the King’s palace, and he determined to hop up to the front gate and wait there until the King came out. But as he was hopping past one of the back windows the King’s cook saw him:

‘Here is the very thing I want,’ he exclaimed, ‘for the King has just sent a message to say that he must have chicken broth for his dinner,’ and opening the window he stretched out his arm, caught Medio Pollito, and popped him into the broth-pot that was standing near the fire. Oh! how wet and clammy the water felt as it went over Medio Pollito’s head, making his feathers cling to his side.

‘Water, water!’ he cried in his despair, ‘do have pity upon me and do not wet me like this.’

‘Ah! Medio Pollito,’ replied the water, ‘you would not help me when I was a little stream away on the fields, now you must be punished.’

Then the fire began to burn and scald Medio Pollito, and he danced and hopped from one side of the pot to the other, trying to get away from the heat, and crying out in pain:

Fire, fire! do not scorch me like this; you can't think how it hurts.'

'Ah! Medio Pollito,' answered the fire, 'you would not help me when I was dying away in the wood. You are being punished.'

At last, just when the pain was so great that Medio Pollito thought he must die, the cook lifted up the lid of the pot to see if the broth was ready for the King's dinner.

'Look here!' he cried in horror, 'this chicken is quite useless. It is burnt to a cinder. I can't send it up to the royal table;' and opening the window he threw Medio Pollito out into the street. But the wind caught him up, and whirled him through the air so quickly that Medio Pollito could scarcely breathe, and his heart beat against his side till he thought it would break.

'Oh, wind!' at last he gasped out, 'if you hurry me along like this you will kill me. Do let me rest a moment, or--' but he was so breathless that he could not finish his sentence.

'Ah! Medio Pollito,' replied the wind, 'when I was caught in the branches of the chestnut tree you would not help me; now you are punished.' And he swirled Medio Pollito over the roofs of the houses till they reached the highest church in the town, and there he left him fastened to the top of the steeple.

And there stands Medio Pollito to this day. And if you go to Madrid, and walk through the streets till you come to the highest church, you will see Medio Pollito perched on his one leg on the steeple, with his one wing drooping at his side, and gazing sadly out of his one eye over the town.

Spanish Tradition.

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## IN THE HEMLOCKS.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Volume 17, No. 104, June, 1866, by Various

Most people receive with incredulity a statement of the number of birds that annually visit our climate. Very few even are aware of half the

number that spend the summer in their own immediate vicinity. We little suspect, when we walk in the woods, whose privacy we are intruding upon,--what rare and elegant visitants from Mexico, from Central and South America, and from the islands of the sea, are holding their reunions in the branches over our heads, or pursuing their pleasure on the ground before us.

I recall the altogether admirable and shining family which Thoreau dreamed he saw in the upper chambers of Spaulding's woods, which Spaulding did not know lived there, and which were not put out when Spaulding, whistling, drove his team through their lower halls. They did not go into society in the village; they were quite well; they had sons and daughters; they neither wove nor spun; there was a sound as of suppressed hilarity.

I take it for granted that the forester was only saying a pretty thing of the birds, though I have observed that it does sometimes annoy them when Spaulding's cart rumbles through their house. Generally, however, they are as unconscious of Spaulding as Spaulding is of them.

Walking the other day in an old hemlock wood, I counted over forty varieties of these summer visitants, many of them common to other woods in the vicinity, but quite a number peculiar to these ancient solitudes, and not a few that are rare in any locality. It is quite unusual to find so large a number abiding in one forest,--and that not a large one,--most of them nesting and spending the summer there. Many of those I observed commonly pass this season much farther north. But the geographical distribution of birds is rather a climatical one. The same temperature, though under different parallels, usually attracts the same birds; difference in altitude being equivalent to the difference in latitude. A given height above the sea level under the parallel of 30° may have the same climate as places under that of 35°, and similar Flora and Fauna. At the head-waters of the Delaware, where I write, the latitude is that of Boston, but the region has a much greater elevation, and hence a climate that compares better with the northern part of the State and of New England. Half a day's drive to the southeast brings me down into quite a different temperature, with an older geological formation, different forest timber, and different birds,--even with different mammals. Neither the little Gray Rabbit nor the little Gray Fox is found in my locality, but the great Northern Hare and the Red Fox are seen here. In the last century a colony of beavers dwelt here, though the oldest inhabitant cannot now point to even the traditional site of their dams. The ancient hemlocks, whither I propose to take the reader, are rich in many things beside birds. Indeed, their wealth in this respect is owing mainly, no doubt, to their rank vegetable growths, their fruitful swamps, and their dark, sheltered retreats.

Their history is of an heroic cast. Ravished and torn by the tanner in his thirst for bark, preyed upon by the lumberman, assaulted and beaten



back by the settler, still their spirit has never been broken, their energies never paralyzed. Not many years ago a public highway passed through them, but it was at no time a tolerable road; trees fell across it, mud and limbs choked it up, till finally travellers took the hint and went around; and now, walking along its deserted course, I see only the footprints of coons, foxes, and squirrels.

Nature loves such woods, and places her own seal upon them. Here she shows me what can be done with ferns and mosses and lichens. The soil is marrowy and full of innumerable forests. Standing in these fragrant aisles, I feel the strength of the vegetable kingdom and am awed by the deep and inscrutable processes of life going on so silently about me.

No hostile forms with axe or spud now visit these solitudes. The cows have half-hidden ways through them, and know where the best browsing is to be had. In spring the farmer repairs to their bordering of maples to make sugar; in July and August women and boys from all the country about penetrate the old Barkpeeling for raspberries and blackberries; and I know a youth who wonderingly follows their languid stream casting for trout.

In like spirit, alert and buoyant, on this bright June morning go I also to reap my harvest,--pursuing a sweet more delectable than sugar, fruit more savory than berries, and game for another palate than that tickled by trout.

June, of all the months, the student of ornithology can least afford to lose. Most birds are nesting then, and in full song and plumage. And what is a bird without its song? Do we not wait for the stranger to speak? It seems to me that I do not know a bird till I have heard its voice; then I come nearer it at once, and it possesses a human interest to me. I have met the Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Turdus aliciae*) in the woods, and held him in my hand; still I do not know him. The silence of the Cedar-Bird throws a mystery about him which neither his good looks nor his petty larcenies in cherry time can dispel. A bird's song contains a clew to its life, and establishes a sympathy, an understanding, between itself and the admiring listener.

I descend a steep hill, and approach the hemlocks through a large sugar-bush. When twenty rods distant, I hear all along the line of the forest the incessant warble of the Red-eyed Flycatcher (*Vireosylva olivacea*), cheerful and happy as the merry whistle of a schoolboy. He is one of our most common and widely distributed birds. Approach any forest at any hour of the day, in any kind of weather, from May to August, in any of the Middle or Eastern districts, and the chances are that the first note you hear will be his. Rain or shine, before noon or after, in the deep forest or in the village grove,--when it is too hot for the thrushes or too cold and windy for the warblers,--it is never out of time or place for this little minstrel to indulge his cheerful

strain. In the deep wilds of the Adirondac, where few birds are seen and fewer heard, his note was almost constantly in my ear. Always busy, making it a point never to suspend for one moment his occupation to indulge his musical taste, his lay is that of industry and contentment. There is nothing plaintive or especially musical in his performance, but the sentiment expressed is eminently that of cheerfulness. Indeed the songs of most birds have some human significance, which, I think, is the source of the delight we take in them. The song of the Bobolink, to me, expresses hilarity; the Song-Sparrow's, faith; the Bluebird's, love; the Cat-Bird's, pride; the White-eyed Fly-catcher's, self-consciousness; that of the Hermit-Thrush, spiritual serenity; while there is something military in the call of the Robin, and unalloyed contentment in the warble of the Red-eyed Vireo.

This bird is classed among the flycatchers, but is much more of a worm-eater, and has few of the traits or habits of the Muscicapa or the true Sylvia. He resembles somewhat the Warbling Vireo (Vireo gilvus), and the two birds are often confounded by careless observers. Both warble in the same cheerful strain, but the latter more continuously and rapidly. The Red-Eye is a larger, slimmer bird, with a faint bluish crown, and a light line over the eye. His movements are peculiar. You may see him hopping among the limbs, exploring the under side of the leaves, peering to the right and left,--now flitting a few feet, now hopping as many,--and warbling incessantly, occasionally in a subdued tone, which sounds from a very indefinite distance. When he has found a worm to his liking, he turns lengthwise of the limb, and bruises its head with his beak before devouring it.

As I enter the woods the Slate-colored Snowbird (Fringilla Hudsonia) starts up before me and chirps sharply. His protest when thus disturbed is almost metallic in its sharpness. He breeds here, and is not esteemed a snowbird at all, as he disappears at the near approach of winter, and returns again in spring, like the Song-Sparrow, and is not in any way associated with the cold and the snow. So different are the habits of birds in different localities. Even the Crow does not winter here, and is seldom seen after December or before March.

The Snow-Bird, or "Black Chipping-Bird," as it is known among the farmers, is the finest architect of any of the ground-builders known to me. The site of its nest is usually some low bank by the roadside near a wood. In a slight excavation, with a partially concealed entrance, the exquisite structure is placed. Horse-hair and cow-hair are plentifully used, imparting to the interior of the nest great symmetry and firmness as well as softness.

Passing down through the maple arches, barely pausing to observe the antics of a trio of squirrels,--two gray ones and a black one,--I cross an ancient brush fence and am fairly within the old hemlocks, and in one of the most primitive, undisturbed nooks. In the deep moss I tread as

with muffled feet, and the pupils of my eyes dilate in the dim, almost religious light. The irreverent red squirrels, however, run and snicker at my approach, or mock the solitude with their ridiculous chattering and frisking.

This nook is the chosen haunt of the Winter Wren. This is the only place and these the only woods in which I find him in this vicinity. His voice fills these dim aisles, as if aided by some marvellous sounding-board. Indeed, his song is very strong for so small a bird, and unites in a remarkable degree brilliancy and plaintiveness. I think of a tremulous vibrating tongue of silver. You may know it is the song of a wren, from its gushing lyrical character; but you must needs look sharp to see the little minstrel, especially while in the act of singing. He is nearly the color of the ground and the leaves; he never ascends the tall trees, but keeps low, flitting from stump to stump and from root to root, dodging in and out of his hiding-places, and watching all intruders with a suspicious eye. He has a very perk, almost comical look. His tail stands more than perpendicular: it points straight toward his head. He is the least ostentatious singer I know of. He does not strike an attitude, and lift up his head in preparation, and, as it were, clear his throat; but sits there on the log and pours out his music, looking straight before him, or even down at the ground. As a songster, he has but few superiors. I do not hear him after the first week in July.

While sitting on this soft-cushioned log, tasting the pungent acidulous wood-sorrel (*Oxalis acetorella*), the blossoms of which, large and pink-veined, rise everywhere above the moss, a rufous-colored bird flies quickly past, and, alighting on a low limb a few rods off, salutes me with "Whew! Whew!" or "Whoit! Whoit!" almost as you would whistle for your dog. I see by his impulsive, graceful movements, and his dimly speckled breast, that it is a Thrush. Presently he utters a few soft, mellow, flute-like notes, one of the most simple expressions of melody to be heard, and scuds away, and I see it is the Veery or Wilson's Thrush. He is the least of the Thrushes in size, being about that of the common Bluebird, and he may be distinguished from his relatives by the dimness of the spots upon his breast. The Wood-Thrush has very clear, distinct oval spots on a white ground; in the Hermit, the spots run more into lines, on a ground of a faint bluish-white; in the Veery, the marks are almost obsolete, and a few rods off his breast presents only a dull yellowish appearance. To get a good view of him you have only to sit down in his haunts, as in such cases he seems equally anxious to get a good view of you.

From those tall hemlocks proceeds a very fine insect-like warble, and occasionally I see a spray *teeter*, or catch the flit of a wing. I watch and watch till my head grows dizzy and my neck is in danger of permanent displacement, and still do not get a good view. Presently the bird darts, or, as it seems, falls down a few feet in pursuit of a fly or moth, and I see the whole of it, but in the dim light am undecided.

It is for such emergencies that I have brought this gun. A bird in the hand is worth half a dozen in the bush, even for ornithological purposes; and no sure and rapid progress can be made in the study without taking life, without procuring specimens. This bird is a Warbler, plainly enough, from his habits and manner; but what kind of Warbler? Look on him and name him: a deep orange or flame-colored throat and breast; the same color showing also in a line over the eye and in his crown; back variegated black and white. The female is less marked and brilliant. The Orange-throated Warbler would seem to be his right name, his characteristic cognomen; but no, he is doomed to wear the name of some discoverer, perhaps the first who robbed his nest or rifled him of his mate,--Blackburn; hence, Blackburnian Warbler. The burn seems appropriate enough, for in these dark evergreens his throat and breast show like flame. He has a very fine warble, suggesting that of the Redstart, but not especially musical. I find him in no other woods in this vicinity.

I am attracted by another warble in the same locality, and experience a like difficulty in getting a good view of the author of it. It is quite a noticeable strain, sharp and sibilant, and sounds well amid the old trees. In the upland woods of beech and maple it is a more familiar sound than in these solitudes. On taking the bird in your hand, even if you are not a young lady, you will probably exclaim, "How beautiful!" So tiny and elegant, the smallest of the Warblers; a delicate blue back, with a slight bronze-colored triangular spot between the shoulders; upper mandible black; lower mandible yellow as gold; throat yellow, becoming a dark bronze on the breast. Blue Yellow-Back he is called, though the yellow is much nearer a bronze. He is remarkably delicate and beautiful,--the handsomest, as he is the smallest, of the Warblers known to me. It is never without surprise that I find amid these rugged, savage aspects of Nature creatures so fairy and delicate. But such is the law. Go to the sea or climb the mountain, and with the ruggedest and the savagest you will find likewise the fairest and the most delicate. The greatness and the minuteness of Nature pass all understanding.

Ever since I entered the woods, even while listening to the lesser songsters, or contemplating the silent forms about me, a strain has reached my ear from out the depths of the forest that to me is the finest sound in nature,--the song of the Hermit-Thrush. I often hear him thus a long way off, sometimes over a quarter of a mile away, when only the stronger and more perfect parts of his music reach me; and through the general chorus of Wrens and Warblers I detect this sound rising pure and serene, as if a spirit from some remote height were slowly chanting a divine accompaniment. This song appeals to the sentiment of the beautiful in me, and suggests a serene religious beatitude as no other sound in nature does. It is perhaps more of an evening than a morning hymn, though I hear it at all hours of the day. It is very simple, and I can hardly tell the secret of its charm. "O spherul, spherul!" he seems to say; "O holy, holy! O clear away, clear away! O clear up, clear up!"

interspersed with the finest trills and the most delicate preludes. It is not a proud, gorgeous strain, like the Tanager's or the Grosbeak's; suggests no passion or emotion,--nothing personal,--but seems to be the voice of that calm, sweet solemnity one attains to in his best moments. It realizes a peace and a deep, solemn joy that only the finest souls may know. A few nights ago I ascended a mountain to see the world by moonlight; and when near the summit the Hermit commenced his evening hymn a few rods from me. Listening to this strain on the lone mountain, with the full moon just rounded from the horizon, the pomp of your cities and the pride of your civilization seemed trivial and cheap.

Whether it is because of their rareness, or an accident of my observation, or a characteristic trait, I cannot tell, yet I have never known two of these birds to be singing at the same time in the same locality, rivalling each other, like the Wood-Thrush or the Veery. Shooting one from a tree, I have observed another take up the strain from almost the identical perch in less than ten minutes afterward. Later in the day, when I had penetrated the heart of the old Barkpeeling, I came suddenly upon one singing from a low stump, and for a wonder he did not seem alarmed, but lifted up his divine voice as if his privacy was undisturbed. I open his beak and find the inside yellow as gold. I was prepared to find it inlaid with pearls and diamonds, or to see an angel issue from it.

He is not much in the books. Indeed, I am acquainted with scarcely any writer on ornithology whose head is not muddled on the subject of our three prevailing song-thrushes, confounding either their figures or their songs. A writer in the Atlantic[A] gravely tells us the Wood-Thrush is sometimes called the Hermit, and then, after describing the song of the Hermit with great beauty and correctness, coolly ascribes it to the Veery! The new Cyclopædia, fresh from the study of Audubon, says the Hermit's song consists of a single plaintive note, and that the Veery's resembles that of the Wood-Thrush! These observations deserve to be preserved with that of the author of "Out-door Papers," who tells us the trill of the Hair-Bird (*Fringilla socialis*) is produced by the bird fluttering its wings upon its sides! The Hermit-Thrush may be easily identified by his color; his back being a clear olive-brown, becoming rufous on his rump and tail. A quill from his wing placed beside one from his tail, on a dark ground, presents quite a marked contrast.

I walk along the old road, and note the tracks in the thin layer of mud. When do these creatures travel here? I have never yet chanced to meet one. Here a partridge has set its foot; there, a woodcock; here, a squirrel or mink; there, a skunk; there, a fox. What a clear, nervous track Reynard makes! how easy to distinguish it from that of a little dog,--it is so sharply cut and defined! A dog's track is coarse and clumsy beside it. There is as much wildness in the track of an animal as in its voice. Is a deer's track like a sheep's or a goat's? What

winged-footed fleetness and agility may be inferred from the sharp, braided track of the gray squirrel upon the new snow! Ah! in nature is the best discipline. I think the sculptor might carve finer and more expressive lines if he grew up in the woods, and the painter discriminate finer hues. How wood-life sharpens the senses, giving a new power to the eye, the ear, the nose! And are not the rarest and most exquisite songsters wood-birds?

Everywhere in these solitudes I am greeted with the pensive, almost pathetic note of the Wood-Pewee. Do you know the Pewees? They are the true Flycatchers, and are easily identified. They are very characteristic birds, have very strong family traits, and very pugnacious dispositions. Without any exception or qualification they are the homeliest or the least elegant birds of our fields or forest. Sharp-shouldered, big-headed, short-legged, of no particular color, of little elegance in flight or movement, with a disagreeable flirt of the tail, always quarrelling with their neighbors and with one another, no birds are so little calculated to excite pleasurable emotions in the beholder, or to become objects of human interest and affection. The King-Bird is the best-dressed member of the family, but he is a braggart; and, though always snubbing his neighbors, is an arrant coward, and shows the white feather at the slightest display of pluck in his antagonist. I have seen him turn tail to a Swallow, and have known the little Pewee in question to whip him beautifully. From the Great Crested to the Little Green Flycatcher, their ways and general habits are the same. Slow in flying from point to point, they yet have a wonderful quickness, and snap up the fleetest insects with little apparent effort. There is a constant play of quick, nervous movements underneath their outer show of calmness and stolidity. They do not scour the limbs and trees like the Warblers, but, perched upon the middle branches, wait like true hunters for the game to come along. There is often a very audible snap of the beak as they arrest their prey.

The Wood-Pewee, the prevailing species in this locality, arrests your attention by his sweet, pathetic cry. There is room for it also in the deep woods, as well as for the more prolonged and elevated strains. His mate builds an exquisite nest of moss on the side of some shelving cliff or overhanging rock. The other day, passing by a ledge near the top of a mountain in a singularly desolate locality, my eye rested upon one of these structures, looking precisely as if it grew there, so in keeping was it with the mossy character of the rock; and I have had a growing affection for the bird ever since. The rock seemed to love the nest and to claim it as its own. I said, What a lesson in architecture is here! Here is a house that was built, but built with such loving care and such beautiful adaptation of the means to the end, that it looks like a product of nature. The same wise economy is noticeable in the nests of all birds. No bird would paint its house white or red, or add aught for show.

Coming to a drier and less mossy place in the woods, I am amused with the Golden-crowned Thrush,--which, however, is no thrush at all, but a Warbler, the *Sciurus aurocapillus*. He walks on the ground ahead of me with such an easy gliding motion, and with such an unconscious, preoccupied air, jerking his head like a hen or a partridge, now hurrying, now slackening his pace, that I pause to observe him. If I sit down, he pauses to observe me, and extends his pretty ramblings on all sides, apparently very much engrossed with his own affairs, but never losing sight of me. But few of the birds are walkers, most being hoppers, like the Robin. I recall only five species of the former among our ordinary birds,--the one in question, the Meadow-Lark, the Tit-Lark, the Cow-Bunting, and the Water-Wagtail (a relative of the Golden-Crown).

Satisfied that I have no hostile intentions, the pretty pedestrian mounts a limb a few feet from the ground, and gives me the benefit of one of his musical performances, a sort of accelerating chant. Commencing in a very low key, which makes him seem at a very uncertain distance, he grows louder and louder, till his body quakes and his chant runs into a shriek, ringing in my ears with a peculiar sharpness. This lay may be represented thus: "Teacher teacher, teacher, teacher teacher!"--the accent on the first syllable and each word uttered with increased force and shrillness. No writer with whom I am acquainted gives him credit for more musical ability than is displayed in this strain. Yet in this the half is not told. He has a far rarer song, which he reserves for some nymph whom he meets in the air. Mounting by easy flights to the top of the tallest tree, he launches into the air with a sort of suspended, hovering flight, like certain of the Finches, and bursts into a perfect ecstasy of song,--clear, ringing, copious, rivalling the Goldfinch's in vivacity, and the Linnet's in melody. This strain is one of the rarest bits of bird-melody to be heard. Over the woods, hid from view, the ecstatic singer warbles his finest strain. In this song you instantly detect his relationship to the Water-Wagtail (*Sciurus noveboracensis*),--erroneously called Water-Thrush,--whose song is likewise a sudden burst, full and ringing, and with a tone of youthful joyousness in it, as if the bird had just had some unexpected good-fortune. For nearly two years this strain of the pretty walker was little more than a disembodied voice to me, and I was puzzled by it as Thoreau by his mysterious Night-Warbler, which, by the way, I suspect was no new bird at all, but one he was otherwise familiar with. The little bird himself seems disposed to keep the matter a secret, and improves every opportunity to repeat before you his shrill, accelerating lay, as if this were quite enough and all he laid claim to. Still, I trust I am betraying no confidence in making the matter public here. I think this is pre-eminently his love-song, as I hear it oftenest about the mating season. I have caught half-suppressed bursts of it from two birds chasing each other with fearful speed through the forest.

Turning to the left from the old road, I wander, over soft logs and gray yielding *débris*, across the little trout brook, until I emerge in the

Barkpeeling,--pausing now and then on the way to admire a small, solitary white flower which rises above the moss, with radical, heart-shaped leaves, and a blossom precisely like the liverwort except in color, but which is not put down in my botany,--or to observe the ferns, of which I count six varieties, some gigantic ones nearly shoulder-high.

At the foot of a rough, scraggy yellow birch, on a bank of club-moss, so richly inlaid with partridge-berry and curious shining leaves,--with here and there in the bordering a spire of the false wintergreen (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) strung with faint pink flowers and exhaling the breath of a May orchard,--that it looks too costly a couch for such an idler, I recline to note what transpires. The sun is just past the meridian, and the afternoon chorus is not yet in full tune. Most birds sing with the greatest spirit and vivacity in the forenoon, though there are occasional bursts later in the day, in which nearly all voices join; while it is not till the twilight that the full power and solemnity of the thrush's hymn is felt.

My attention is soon arrested by a pair of Humming-Birds, the Ruby-Throated, disporting themselves in a low bush a few yards from me. The female takes shelter amid the branches, and squeaks exultingly as the male, circling above, dives down as if to dislodge her. Seeing me, he drops like a feather on a slender twig, and in a moment both are gone. Then, as if by a preconcerted signal, the throats are all atune. I lie on my back with eyes half closed, and analyze the chorus of Warblers, Thrushes, Finches, and Flycatchers; while, soaring above all, a little withdrawn and alone, rises the divine soprano of the Hermit. That richly modulated warble proceeding from the top of yonder birch, and which unpractised ears would mistake for the voice of the Scarlet Tanager, comes from that rare visitant, the Rose-breasted Grosbeak. It is a strong, vivacious strain, a bright noonday song, full of health and assurance, indicating fine talents in the performer, but not genius. As I come up under the tree he casts his eye down at me, but continues his song. This bird is said to be quite common in the Northwest, but he is rare in the Eastern districts. His beak is disproportionately large and heavy, like a huge nose, which slightly mars his good looks; but Nature has made it up to him in a blush rose upon his breast, and the most delicate of pink linings to the under side of his wings. His back is variegated black and white, and when flying low the white shows conspicuously. If he passed over your head, you would note the delicate flush under his wings.

That bit of bright scarlet on yonder dead hemlock, glowing like a live coal against the dark background, seeming almost too brilliant for the severe Northern climate, is his relative, the Scarlet Tanager. I occasionally meet him in the deep hemlocks, and know no stronger contrast in nature. I almost fear he will kindle the dry limb on which he alights. He is quite a solitary bird, and in this section seems to



prefer the high, remote woods, even going quite to the mountain's top. Indeed, the event of my last visit to the mountain was meeting one of these brilliant creatures near the summit, in full song. The breeze carried the notes far and wide. He seemed to enjoy the elevation, and I imagined his song had more scope and freedom than usual. When he had flown far down the mountain-side, the breeze still brought me his finest notes. In plumage he is the most brilliant bird we have. The Bluebird is not entirely blue; nor will the Indigo-bird bear a close inspection, nor the Goldfinch, nor the Summer Redbird. But the Tanager loses nothing by a near view; the deep scarlet of his body and the black of his wings and tail are quite perfect. This is his holiday suit; in the fall he becomes a dull green,--the color of the female the whole season.

One of the leading songsters in this choir of the old Barkpeeling is the Purple Finch or Linnet. He sits somewhat apart, usually on a dead hemlock, and warbles most exquisitely. He is one of our finest songsters, and stands at the head of the Finches, as the Hermit at the head of the Thrushes. His song approaches an ecstasy, and, with the exception of the Winter Wren's, is the most rapid and copious strain to be heard in these woods. It is quite destitute of the trills and the liquid, silvery, bubbling notes that characterize the Wren's; but there runs through it a round, richly modulated whistle, very sweet and very pleasing. The call of the Robin is brought in at a certain point with marked effect, and, throughout, the variety is so great and the strain so rapid that the impression is as of two or three birds singing at the same time. He is not common here, and I only find him in these or similar woods. His color is peculiar, and looks as if it might have been imparted by dipping a brown bird in diluted pokeberry juice. Two or three more dippings would have made the purple complete. The female is the color of the Song-Sparrow, a little larger, with heavier beak, and tail much more forked.

In a little opening quite free from brush and trees I step down to bathe my hands in the brook, when a small, light slate-colored bird flutters out of the bank, not three feet from my head, as I stoop down, and, as if severely lamed or injured, flutters through the grass and into the nearest bush. As I do not follow, but remain near the nest, she \_chips\_ sharply, which brings the male, and I see it is the Speckled Canada Warbler. I find no authority in the books for this bird to build upon the ground, yet here is the nest, made chiefly of dry grass, set in a slight excavation in the bank, not two feet from the water, and looking a little perilous to anything but ducklings or sandpipers. There are two young birds and one little specked egg, just pipped. But how is this? what mystery is here? One nestling is much larger than the other, monopolizes most of the nest, and lifts its open mouth far above that of its companion, though obviously both are of the same age, not more than a day old. Ah! I see;--the old trick of the Cow-Bunting, with a stinging human significance. Taking the interloper by the nape of the neck, I deliberately drop it into the water, but not without a pang, as I see

its naked form, convulsed with chills, float down stream. Cruel! So is Nature cruel. I take one life to save two. In less than two days this pot-bellied intruder would have caused the death of the two rightful occupants of the nest; so I step in and divert things into their proper channel again.

It is a singular freak of Nature, this instinct which prompts one bird to lay its eggs in the nests of others, and thus shirk the responsibility of rearing its own young. The Cow-Buntings always resort to this cunning trick; and when one reflects upon their numbers it is evident that these little tragedies are quite frequent. In Europe the parallel case is that of the Cuckoo, and occasionally our own Cuckoo imposes upon a Robin or a Thrush in the same manner. The Cow-Bunting seems to have no conscience about the matter, and, so far as I have observed, invariably selects the nest of a bird smaller than itself. Its egg is usually the first to hatch; its young overreaches all the rest when food is brought; it grows with great rapidity, spreads and fills the nest, and the starved and crowded occupants soon perish, when the parent bird removes their dead bodies, giving its whole energy and care to the foster-child.

The Warblers and smaller Flycatchers are generally the sufferers, though I sometimes see the Slate-colored Snowbird unconsciously duped in like manner; and the other day, in a tall tree in the woods, I discovered the Black-throated Green-backed Warbler devoting itself to this dusky, overgrown foundling. An old farmer to whom I pointed out the fact was much surprised that such things should happen in his woods without his knowledge.

From long observation it is my opinion that the male Bunting selects the nest into which the egg is to be deposited, and exercises a sort of guardianship over it afterward, lingering in the vicinity and uttering his peculiar, liquid, glassy note from the tops of the tall trees.

The Speckled Canada is a very superior Warbler, having a lively, animated strain, reminding you of certain parts of the Canary's, though quite broken and incomplete; the bird the while hopping amid the branches with increased liveliness, and indulging in fine sibilant chirps, too happy to keep silent.

His manners are very marked. He has a habit of curtsying when he discovers you, which is very pretty. In form he is a very elegant bird, somewhat slender, his back of a bluish lead-color becoming nearly black on his crown; the under part of his body, from his throat down, is of a light, delicate yellow, with a belt of black dots across his breast. He has a very fine eye, surrounded by a light yellow ring.

The parent birds are much disturbed by my presence, and keep up a loud, emphatic chirping, which attracts the attention of their sympathetic

neighbors, and one after another they come to see what has happened. The Chestnut-Sided and the Blackburnian come in company. The Black-and-Yellow Warbler pauses a moment and hastens away; the Maryland Yellow-Throat peeps shyly from the lower bushes and utters his "Fip! fip!" in sympathy; the Wood-Pewee comes straight to the tree overhead, and the Red-eyed Vireo lingers and lingers, eying me with a curious, innocent look, evidently much puzzled. But all disappear again, one after another, apparently without a word of condolence or encouragement to the distressed pair. I have often noticed among birds this show of sympathy,--if indeed it be sympathy, and not merely curiosity, or a feeling of doubt concerning their own safety.

An hour afterward I approach the place, find all still, and the mother bird upon the nest. As I draw near she seems to sit closer, her eyes growing large with an inexpressibly wild, beautiful look. She keeps her place till I am within two paces of her, when she flutters away as at first. In the brief interval the remaining egg has hatched, and the two little nestlings lift their heads without being jostled or overreached by any strange bedfellow. A week afterward and they are flown away,--so brief is the infancy of birds. And the wonder is that they escape, even for this short time, the skunks and minks and muskrats that abound here, and that have a decided partiality for such tidbits.

I pass on through the old Barkpeeling, now threading an old cow-path or an overgrown wood-road; now clambering over soft and decayed logs, or forcing my way through a network of briers and hazel; now entering a perfect bower of wild-cherry, beech, and soft-maple; now emerging into a little grassy lane, golden with buttercups or white with daisies, or wading waist-deep in the red raspberry-bushes.

Whir! whir! whir! and a brood of half-grown Partridges start up like an explosion, a few paces from me, and, scattering, disappear in the bushes on all sides. Let me sit down here behind this screen of ferns and briers, and hear this wild-hen of the woods call together her brood. Have you observed at what an early age the Partridge flies? Nature seems to concentrate her energies on the wing, making the safety of the bird a point to be looked after first; and while the body is covered with down, and no signs of feathers are visible, the wing-quills sprout and unfold, and in an incredibly short time the young make fair headway in flying.

The same rapid development of wing may be observed in chickens and turkeys, but not in water-fowls, nor in birds that are safely housed in the nest till full-fledged. The other day, by a brook, I came suddenly upon a young Sandpiper, a most beautiful creature, enveloped in a soft gray down, swift and nimble, and apparently a week or two old, but with no signs of plumage either of body or wing. And it needed none, for it escaped me by taking to the water as readily as if it had flown with wings.

Hark! There arises over there in the brush a soft, persuasive cooing, a sound so subtle and wild and unobtrusive that it requires the most alert and watchful ear to hear it. How gentle and solicitous and full of yearning love! It is the voice of the mother hen. Presently a faint, timid "Yeap!" which almost eludes the ear, is heard in various directions,--the young responding. As no danger seems near, the cooing of the parent bird is soon a very audible clucking call, and the young move cautiously in the direction. Let me step never so carefully from my hiding-place, and all sounds instantly cease, and I search in vain for either parent or young.

The Partridge (*Bonasa umbellus*) is one of our most native and characteristic birds. The woods seem good to be in where I find him. He gives a habitable air to the forest, and one feels as if the rightful occupant was really at home. The woods where I do not find him seem to want something, as if suffering from some neglect of Nature. And then he is such a splendid success, so hardy and vigorous. I think he enjoys the cold and the snow. His wings seem to rustle with more fervency in midwinter. If the snow falls very fast, and promises a heavy storm, he will complacently sit down and allow himself to be snowed under. Approaching him at such times, he suddenly bursts out of the snow at your feet, scattering the flakes in all directions, and goes humming away through the woods like a bomb-shell,--a picture of native spirit and success.

His drum is one of the most welcome and beautiful sounds of spring. Scarcely have the trees showed their buds, when, in the still April mornings, or toward nightfall, you hear the hum of his devoted wings. He selects not, as you would predict, a dry and resinous log, but a decayed and crumbling one, seeming to give the preference to old oak-logs that are partially blended with the soil. If a log to his taste cannot be found, he sets up his altar on a rock, which becomes resonant beneath his fervent blows. Have you seen the Partridge drum? It is the next thing to catching a weasel asleep, though by much caution and tact it may be done. He does not hug the log, but stands very erect, expands his ruff, gives two introductory blows, pauses half a second, and then resumes, striking faster and faster till the sound becomes a continuous, unbroken whir, the whole lasting less than half a minute. The tips of his wings barely brush the log, so that the sound is produced rather by the force of the blows upon the air and upon his own body as in flying. One log will be used for many years, though not by the same drummer. It seems to be a sort of temple, and held in great respect. The bird always approaches it on foot, and leaves it in the same quiet manner, unless rudely disturbed. He is very cunning, though his wit is not profound. It is very difficult to approach him by stealth; you will try many times before succeeding; but seem to pass by him in a great hurry, making all the noise possible, and with plumage furred he stands as immovable as a knot, allowing you a good view and a good shot, if you are a sportsman.

Passing along one of the old barkpeelers' roads which wander aimlessly about, I am attracted by a singularly brilliant and emphatic warble, proceeding from the low bushes, and quickly suggesting the voice of the Maryland Yellow-Throat. Presently the singer hops up on a dry twig, and gives me a good view. Lead-colored head and neck, becoming nearly black on the breast; clear olive-green back, and yellow belly. From his habit of keeping near the ground, even hopping upon it occasionally, I know him to be a Ground-Warbler; from his dark breast the ornithologist has added the expletive Mourning, hence the Mourning Ground-Warbler.

Of this bird both Wilson and Audubon confessed their comparative ignorance, neither ever having seen its nest or become acquainted with its haunts and general habits. Its song is quite striking and novel, though its voice at once suggests the class of Warblers, to which it belongs. It is very shy and wary, flying but a few feet at a time, and studiously concealing itself from your view. I discover but one pair here. The female has food in her beak, but carefully avoids betraying the locality of her nest. The Ground-Warblers all have one notable feature,--very beautiful legs, as white and delicate as if they had always worn silk stockings and satin slippers. High tree Warblers have dark brown or black legs and more brilliant plumage, but less musical ability.

The Chestnut-Sided belongs to the latter class. He is quite common in these woods, as in all the woods about. He is one of the rarest and handsomest of the Warblers; his white breast and throat, chestnut sides, and yellow crown show conspicuously. Audubon did not know his haunts, and had never seen his nest or known any naturalist who had. Last year I found the nest of one in an uplying beech-wood, in a low bush near the roadside, where cows passed and browsed daily. Things went on smoothly till the Cow-Bunting stole her egg into it, when other mishaps followed, and the nest was soon empty. A characteristic attitude of the male during this season is a slight drooping of the wings, and tail a little elevated, which gives him a very smart, bantam-like appearance. His song is fine and hurried, and not much of itself, but has its place in the general chorus.

A far sweeter strain, falling on the ear with the true sylvan cadence, is that of the Black-throated Green-backed Warbler, whom I meet at various points. He has no superiors among the true *Sylvia*. His song is very plain and simple, but remarkably pure and tender, and might be indicated by straight lines, thus, ---- ----\----; the first two marks representing two sweet, silvery notes, in the same pitch of voice, and quite unaccented; the latter marks, the concluding notes, wherein the tone and inflection are changed. The throat and breast of the male are a rich black, like velvet, his face yellow, and his back a yellowish green.

Beyond the Barkpeeling, where the woods are mingled hemlock, beech, and

birch, the languid midsummer note of the Black-throated Blue-Back falls on my ear. "Twea, twea, twea-e-e!" in the upward slide, and with the peculiar \_z-ing\_ of certain insects, but not destitute of a certain plaintive cadence. It is one of the most languid, unhurried sounds in all the woods. I feel like reclining upon the dry leaves at once.

Audubon says he has never heard his love-song; but this is all the love-song he has, and he is evidently a very plain hero with his little brown mistress. He is not the bird you would send to the princess to "cheep and twitter twenty million loves"; she would go to sleep while he was piping. He assumes few attitudes, and is not a bold and striking gymnast, like many of his kindred. He has a preference for dense woods of beech and maple, moves slowly amid the lower branches and smaller growths, keeping from eight to ten feet from the ground, and repeating now and then his listless, indolent strain. His back and crown are dark blue; his throat and breast, black; his belly, pure white; and he has a white spot on each wing.

Here and there I meet the Black and White Creeping-Warbler, whose fine strain reminds me of hair-wire. It is unquestionably the finest bird-song to be heard. Few insect strains will compare with it in this respect; while it has none of the harsh, brassy character of the latter, being very delicate and tender.

That sharp, interrupted, but still continued warble, which, before one has learned to discriminate closely, he is apt to confound with the Red-eyed Vireo's, is that of the Solitary Warbling Vireo,--a bird slightly larger, much rarer, and with a louder, less cheerful and happy strain. I see him hopping along lengthwise of the limbs, and note the orange tinge of his breast and sides and the white circle around his eye.

But the declining sun and the deepening shadows admonish me that this ramble must be brought to a close, even though only the leading characters in this chorus of forty songsters have been described, and only a small portion of the venerable old woods explored. In a secluded swampy corner of the old Barkpeeling, where I find the great purple orchis in bloom, and where the foot of man or beast seems never to have trod, I linger long, contemplating the wonderful display of lichens and mosses that overrun both the smaller and the larger growths. Every bush and branch and sprig is dressed up in the most rich and fantastic of liveries; and, crowning all, the long bearded moss festoons the branches or sways gracefully from the limbs. Every twig looks a century old, though green leaves tip the end of it. A young yellow birch has a venerable, patriarchal look, and seems ill at ease under such premature honors. A decayed hemlock is draped as if by hands for some solemn festival.

Mounting toward the upland again, I pause reverently as the hush and stillness of twilight come upon the woods. It is the sweetest, ripest

hour of the day. And as the Hermit's evening hymn goes up from the deep solitude below me, I experience that serene exaltation of sentiment of which music, literature, and religion are but the faint types and symbols.

FOOTNOTES:

[A] For December, 1858.

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## THE REIGN OF THE WHIPPOORWILLS.

—Frank English.

When dew's begin to chill  
The blossom throngs,  
And soft the brooklets trill  
Their slumber-songs,  
We dusky Whippoorwills  
In conquest hold the hills.

When, thro' the midnight dells,  
Wild star-beams glow,  
Like wan-eyed sentinels,  
We dreamward go,  
And hear sung sweetly o'er  
The songs we stilled before.

When waketh dawn, we flee  
The slumber-main,  
And bid the songsters be  
With us again  
To sing in praise of light  
Above the buried night.

But O, when sunrise gleams,  
We vanish fast,  
And woo again in dreams  
The starlit past,  
Till, lo! at twilight gray,  
We wail the dirge of day!

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## THE OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER.

(*Contopus borealis*.)

The Olive-sided Flycatcher is a North American bird breeding in the coniferous forests of our Northern States, northward into Canada and in mountainous regions. It winters in Central and South America.

Like all Flycatchers, their food consists almost exclusively of winged insects, such as beetles, butterflies, moths and the numerous gadflies which abound in the places frequented by these birds. A dead limb or the decayed top of some tall tree giving a good outlook close to the nesting site, is usually selected for a perch, from which excursions are made in different directions after passing insects, which are often chased for quite a distance. This Flycatcher usually arrives on its breeding grounds about the middle of May, and its far-reaching call notes can then be heard almost constantly in the early morning hours and again in the Four Birds & Nature Tues—Hammond evening. Unless close to the bird, this note sounds much like that of the wood pewee, which utters a note of only two syllables, like “pee-wee,” while that of the Olive-sided Flycatcher really consists of three, like “hip-pin-whee.” The first part is uttered short and quick, while the latter two are so accented and drawn out, that at a distance the call sounds as if likewise composed of only two notes, but this is not the case. Their alarm note sounds like “puip-puip-puip,” several times repeated, or “puill-puill-puill;” this is usually given only when the nest is approached, and occasionally a purring sound is also uttered.

Tall evergreen trees, such as pines, hemlocks, spruces, firs and cedars, situated near the edge of an opening or clearing in the forest, not too



far from water and commanding a good outlook, or on a bluff along a stream, a hillside, the shore of a lake or pond, are usually selected as nesting sites by this species, and the nest is generally saddled well out on one of the limbs, where it is difficult to see and still more difficult to get at. Only on rare occasions will this species nest in a deciduous tree.

While it appears tolerant enough toward other species, it will not allow any of its own kind to nest in close proximity to its chosen home, to which it returns from year to year. Each pair seems to claim a certain range, which is rarely less than half a mile in extent, and is usually located along some stream, near the shore of a lake, or by some little pond; generally coniferous forests are preferred, but mixed ones answer their purpose almost equally well as long as they border on a body of water or a beaver meadow and have a few clumps of hemlock or spruce trees scattered through them which will furnish suitable nesting sites and lookout perches.

While on a collecting trip a nest of this species was observed in a spruce tree and about forty-five feet from the ground. The birds betrayed the location of the nest by their excited actions and incessant scolding. They were very bold, flying close around the climber's head, snapping their bills at him, and uttering angry notes of defiance rather than of distress, something like "puy-pip-pip." They could not possibly have been more pugnacious.

The nest was a well-built structure. It was outwardly composed of fine, wiry roots and small twigs, mixed with green moss and lined with fine roots and moss. It was securely fixed among a mass of fine twigs growing out at that point of the limb.

As a rule the nests are placed at a considerable height from the ground, usually from forty to sixty feet, though occasionally one is found that is not more than twenty feet.

In spite of their pugnacious and quarrelsome habits these birds are so attached to the localities they have selected for their homes that they will usually lay a second set of eggs in the same nest from which their first set has been taken—Adapted from Charles Bendire's *Life Histories of North American Birds*.

Poem and article from:

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Birds and Nature*, Vol. 10 No. 3  
[October 1901], by Various

## Illustrations

Description

### **Olive-sided Flycatcher**

Sobrante Ridge Regional Preserve, Richmond, California

Date 2 May 2017, 09:14

Author Becky Matsubara from El Sobrante, California

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Olive-sided\\_Flycatcher\\_\(33585416604\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Olive-sided_Flycatcher_(33585416604).jpg)

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Description

### **Buzzards**

1. (left) *Buteo plumipes* Hodgs. = *Buteo buteo japonicus* Temminck & Schlegel, 1844
2. (right) *Archibuteo strophiatius* Hodgs. = *Buteo hemilasius* Temminck & Schlegel, 1844

English: Eurasian Buzzard (left), Upland Buzzard (right)

Date 1874

Source Catalogue of the birds in the British Museum (Vol. 1 Plate VII)

Author

John Gerrard Keulemans (1842–1912) Blue pencil.svg wikidata:Q1335286 s:en:Author:John Gerrard Keulemans

Richard Bowdler Sharpe (text)

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### **Domesticated Geese**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:-\\_panoramio\\_-\\_spiros\\_tavern.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:-_panoramio_-_spiros_tavern.jpg)

Date Taken on 27 March 2006

Source <https://web.archive.org/web/20161110220737/http://www.panoramio.com/photo/41201316>

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